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COMMONS, HEATHS AND GREENS IN GREATER LONDON REPORT (2005)

David Lambert and Sally Williams, The Parks Agency

ENGLISH HERITAGE

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SUMMARY

In 2005, The Parks Agency was commissioned to undertake a study of London's commons, heaths and greens and to identify historic environment conservation issues, and priorities for future study and funding. The study was prompted by concerns about the pressures faced by these green spaces and the need to have a better understanding about their historic interest and levels of change.

In 2005 The Parks Agency research found:

- 43.75 per cent had notable unplanned tree and scrub growth in the last fifty years
- 87.5 per cent had formal tree planting schemes in the last hundred years, generally of street trees along boundaries or paths
- 68.75 per cent had lost margins to highway development in the last fifty years, either road widening or formalising of routes
- 47 per cent had leisure development, such as play areas or visitor centres, in the last fifty years
- 35 per cent had formal sports provision introduced in the last hundred years and some sports facilities are dominant features
- 58.8 per cent had car-parking space constructed in the last fifty years
- 70 per cent have new bitmac paths constructed
- Bland, municipal furniture and lighting affected almost all sites
- Grass and soil erosion, and the creation of desire-line paths likewise affected almost all sites
- Most sites were affected by the growth of traffic and parking on adjoining roads

The capital's commons, greens and heaths are highly valued as part of its Green Infrastructure. Since the 2005 report, there have been significant developments such as London's Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance, the All London Green Grid, and national commons management legislation, however, conservation concerns continue.

English Heritage's Research Report 4-2014 reviewed research priorities for urban parks, designed landscapes and open spaces. The author stressed the need to reassert the heritage argument in the Green Infrastructure debate and to disseminate research. The Park Agency's report is being published in 2014 to make this research more widely available in keeping with the research priorities review recommendations; and to complement English Heritage's study *An Archaeology of Town Commons in England. 'A very fair field indeed'* published in 2009. Although the Parks Agency report focuses on London, it will also be of interest to those championing and caring for commons, heaths and greens heritage in other towns and cities.

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In their 2005 report David Lambert and Sally Williams wrote 'in addition to all those who patiently answered questions, we would particularly like to record our thanks to Martin Boyle (Mitcham Common Conservators), Drew Bennellick (English Heritage), Steve Crow (London Borough of Greenwich), Nick Day (Plumstead Common Environment Group), Jan Hewlett (GLA), Bob Ivison (London Parks and Green Spaces Forum), Peter Marshall (London Borough of Redbridge), Chris Slack (LB Hounslow), Stewart Hunt (London Borough of Hillingdon), Gormla O'Corrain (London Borough of Redbridge), Emma Sexton, (London Borough of Wandsworth), Jeremy Sharmur (London Borough of Greenwich), Dr Barbara Simms (London Parks & Gardens Trust), Kate Tomkinson (Groundwork Thames Valley), Jennifer Ullman (London Borough of Wandsworth)'.

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November 2014

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The Parks Agency is a not-for-profit company (limited by guarantee) which was set up by Dr Stewart Harding and David Lambert to champion good design and management of parks, and the benefits they bring, through consultancy work, public advocacy and campaigning. The Parks Agency is highly experienced in the repair, restoration, enhancement and management of parks and often works with other leading practitioners in the field and in complementary disciplines.

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ABSTRACT

The commons of Greater London, 'have a peculiar charm in their freedom and their natural beauty as opposed to the restrictions and the artificialness of a made park.'[1] So wrote J J Sexby, the London County Council Superintendent of Parks in 1905. Their distinction, or opposition, remains critical to their enjoyment and their management today.

Heaths, commons and village greens are among the most cherished of London's landscapes; the urban population is strongly wedded to the idea of nature. Yet while their ecological value has long been established, less attention has been paid to their historic landscape character. Their management evokes fierce debate about character and about naturalness. How does their present appearance, often the result (as with all green space) of reduced maintenance and ad hoc decisions, relate to their historic character? In terms of land-management, is it natural to allow reduced maintenance to change the character of many commons from open to wooded areas? Is it natural for management to interfere with natural progression in order to conserve or restore rare habitats, such as heathland or acid grassland?

Defra (the Government's Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) has estimated that there are approximately 122 heaths, commons and greens in the Greater London registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965, covering some 1,574ha.[2] In a separate survey, the London Parks & Gardens Trust (LPGT) identifies 111 heaths, commons and greens of historic interest. These areas are a small but significant typological group in the landscape of London; they represent some four per cent of the sites recorded on the LPGT database, while registered commons, heaths and greens account for approximately three per cent of the 55,000ha of non-arable green space in London.[3]

Most commons are clearly landscapes of historic importance. They have often been the subject of literary and artistic representation and many have historic buildings and historic areas around them (52 per cent are associated with listed buildings and 73 per cent with conservation areas). Many commons have had a significant layer of landscape design dating from the late 19th century or occasionally earlier, although to date none have been included on the English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England*. Commons often preserve archaeological remains of many different periods. Although, according to the LPGT, 22 per cent are designated locally as being of archaeological interest, generally 'they have remained,' as English Heritage has stated, 'neglected in terms of research by historians and archaeologists.' Four per cent of commons are associated with scheduled monuments.

The ecological interest of commons is much better established. Some 24 per cent are designated as being of metropolitan importance, 17 per cent of borough importance and 10 per cent of local importance. As of 2002, five of London's registered commons, representing 14 per cent of the total area, were designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The Greater London Authority (GLA) has carried out habitat audits

on heathland, woodland, acid grassland and other relevant types; awareness of their conservation needs is relatively well known.

In recognition of the importance of the commons as 'breathing places' for the metropolis, and in response to public demand, Sexby introduced a good deal of formality into their recreational amenities: levelling, drainage, sports provision, tree planting, formalisation of ponds and construction of paths and other formal built features, such as kiosks, pavilions, drinking fountains, even a bandstand. This wish to see improved facilities remained an important consideration well into the late 20th century. Now there is a demand for personal security and access for all, resulting in further formalisation.

At the same time, there is a new and contrary demand for the preservation of the wilder aspects of commons, and for the retention of their wooded character which has often developed only in the last 25 years.[4]

Registered commons in Greater London encompass an immense range of different types of green space: from the wildness of Barnes Common to the park-like amenities of Brook Green. Furthermore, within the larger sites, such as Wandsworth Common, there are strikingly different character areas, from sports pitches to scrub woodland.

Research into the history of these sites reveals a high level of change in the past fifty years: 44 per cent have seen significant tree and scrub growth, which has drastically changed their character; some 68 per cent have seen margins eroded or tracks upgraded by highway development; 47 per cent have seen leisure development (for example, play areas and visitor buildings); 35 per cent have had sports development such as tennis courts; and 70 per cent have had new tarmac paths constructed. Almost all are more or less affected by the impact of traffic, light pollution, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Management planning needs to balance the demand for wildness with the requirement for security, and at the same time resist ad hoc pressures which slowly erode the very quality of the environment that users cherish. This is a complex process: a first step is an agreed vision for the site based on an assessment of the wide range of values associated with the site, understanding its context in terms of the provision of amenities and establishing a consensus for working in partnership. Above all, it is essential that the special importance of the site is firmly established in order to help resist budget cuts and ad hoc decisions.

INTRODUCTION

'Clapham is a common, not a park', stated the Clapham Society in 1995.[5] The argument over this distinction began with the adoption of the majority of the metropolitan commons by the Metropolitan Board of Works (MBW), responsibility subsequently passing to the London County Council (LCC) and the unitary borough authorities.

Sexby wrote in 1905, 'It has been a great advantage to London to have on its outskirts a number of commons and open spaces available for public resort. The commons have a peculiar charm in their freedom and their natural beauty as opposed to the restrictions and the artificialness of a made park'.[6] He stressed that they were of benefit not just as pasture but as breathing places for the health of the metropolis.[7] The management of commons, as was noted by Denman, Roberts and Smith (1967), 'is inextricably linked up with the administration of open spaces and parks adjoining the commons or in the near vicinity of them'.[8] The distinction lies at the heart of the beauty of many of these places and is also a challenge to their management.

Sites described as heaths, commons and greens encompass a wide variety of landscapes. None is 'natural': all these sites have been managed for centuries. The management regime has changed, often dramatically, as rights of common have been extinguished, and as sites have been acquired for recreational use, been neglected or managed for wildlife conservation. One of the most obvious changes, comparing modern Ordnance Survey (OS) maps with maps of the late 19th century, is the extent to which sites have developed secondary scrub woodland, largely as a result of neglect.

Many users may be unaware of how much more wooded commons have become as a result of traditional usage having stopped. The appearance of these sites in about 1900 was often far more open. The Scope area of Wandsworth Common, for example, is dominated by scrub growth swallowing up open-grown trees and almost overwhelming the remaining patches of the original Purple Moor Grass (*Molinia caerulea*).

Historically, commons, including heaths, were generally managed as a natural resource for the local population, whether for timber, fuel, building materials, grazing or fishing. As London expanded, however, many also developed an important informal role as lungs for the metropolis. This recreational role was formalised by the Metropolitan Commons Act 1866, which prevented development without the consent of the Secretary of State and provided for public access and for schemes of management. The latter were introduced on many sites, first by the MBW, then by the LCC and finally by the borough authorities.

A significant minority of commons are managed under different arrangements, principally those protected by a specific Act of Parliament which set up a board of conservators. Other local arrangements can be found, such as that for Monken Hadley, which is owned by the church and was administered for many years by the churchwardens, and is now run by a local committee.

The extent to which these lands are positively managed, and for what purpose, varies enormously. The range extends from amenity grassland and playing fields to long grass and vestigial heathland habitats. These sites need to be subdivided into different sub-sets to reflect their diversity. Furthermore, most sites, except the smallest, require their management and maintenance regimes to differentiate between different areas. Amenity grassland, woodland, play areas, water, meadow grassland and rarer habitat types co-exist in a fluid relationship on many of the sites described in this report (see Management and Maintenance below). A long-term management and maintenance plan is essential for this to be achieved.

Commons, heaths and village greens are some of the oldest surviving elements of the medieval landscape of Greater London. Many former areas of this kind have been lost to housing development. Many more have been adapted to recreational use, whether in the form of golf courses, sports pitches or formal parks, with a consequent loss of their rough character, defined by Denman, Roberts and Smith (1967) as 'unfenced areas in an informal natural condition.' Such development has also meant an erosion of the physical, archaeological fabric of these landscapes. Increasing awareness of post-medieval archaeology (for example, agricultural and industrial archaeology) has resulted in better investigation and recording of the kinds of archaeological remains associated with such landscapes. The planning system is better equipped to ensure appropriate assessment as part of any development proposal, but this does not preclude changes to the character of the landscape. Many changes occurred as part of the 19th-century public parks movement, especially after the 1866 Act. This ushered in a process of 'improvement', illustrated for example by Kennington Common, which often radically changed the character of a site, from being a nondescript place where a wide variety of functions were allowed by custom, and management was essentially agricultural, to parks with by-laws, formal recreational provision and formal landscaping.

One of the key debates today in many cases is whether a site is a 'common' or a 'park'. Pressure comes from both sides, either for more formal recreation and a tidier landscape, or for resisting further formalisation and returning to, or retaining the vestiges of, a wilder landscape. Thus, while at Hounslow Heath there is widespread understanding that heathland conservation involves bulldozing scrub, at Wandsworth there is highly vociferous opposition to any form of clearance of understorey to encourage the rarer acid grassland plants. A partial view of nature can make it almost impossible to do the right thing either for the habitat or for perceptions of safety. At Barnes Common, since the reduction of management in the 19th century, the nature conservation value of the rarer habitats has been threatened precisely by natural progression of scrub and woodland growth. At Clapham, there is a strong local argument in favour of encouraging the development of scrub woodland and long grass, while at the same time there is enormous pressure to meet the demands for events, play and sport, and to combat anti-social behaviour.

Definitions

This study addresses sites 'described as' heaths, commons and greens. Each of these terms has a specific meaning either legally or ecologically.

Heaths (as distinct from the habitat type 'heathland') may or may not be covered by commons and greens legislation. Heathland habitat occurs on some commons but is a specifically defined type of habitat comprising heather and gorse and low shrubs on acid soil. Grazing preserved heathland habitats but they have declined drastically both globally and in London, where they are now represented by 'a few surviving fragments'.[9]

Commons are land, irrespective of ownership, to which rights of common, such as grazing, gathering fuel or digging sand, gravel or peat, apply or, at least, used to apply. Many sites known as 'commons' are no longer subject to such rights, their ownership and rights having been acquired by a public body, such as the MBW or its successors, the LCC and the unitary borough authorities. Under section 5 of the Metropolitan Commons Act 1866, the Secretary of State is prohibited from entertaining an application for the enclosure of any part of a metropolitan common. The Commons Registration Act 1965 requires all common land to be definitively registered as such.

Greens originated with the allotment of land for exercise and recreation in Enclosure Acts. After 1845, if such an Act did not include a green, the reasons had to be given in a report to Parliament. Like commons, greens were generally owned by the lord of the manor. However, since the mid-19th century, freeholds have generally been sold or given

Image 1 Hampstead Heath, view from Parliament Hill of a recent sculpture installation. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

to a local body, such as a parish council or, in the case of London, the unitary authorities. Although originally often common land, greens were registered separately under the 1965 Act, which introduced a mutually exclusive definition of the two types. The 1965 Act defined a village green either as land allotted for the exercise and recreation of the local inhabitants, land on which the inhabitants have a customary right to indulge in lawful sports or pastimes, or land on which the inhabitants have indulged in such sports or pastimes for not less than 20 years.[10]

The metropolitan commons

The commons in the Greater London area are by and large vestiges of the ancient common lands associated with the individual villages now amalgamated within the metropolitan area. As the city expanded, their owners frequently sold off parts of these commons for development, a process which accelerated with the urban expansion of the 18th and especially the 19th century. From 1794 to 1866, for example, there were 53 enclosures on Wandsworth Common, of areas from 0.25 acre to 96 acres. Wandsworth and Tooting Commons exemplify the subdivision and break-up of formerly extensive areas of common land during the early 19th century. Public concern about the loss of these open spaces to residential development, gravel and sand extraction, and road and railway construction, was crystallised in a Select Committee inquiry in 1865, which led to the 1866 Metropolitan Commons Act.

The 1866 Act prohibited any building or enclosure on any London common without the consent of the Secretary of State, confirmed in section 194 of the Law of Property Act 1925. It also provided for the promotion of schemes of management for the regulation of commons in the Metropolitan Police District (roughly the equivalent of the present Greater London area). As a result, the MBW, later the LCC, was able to acquire the freehold of large areas of common land from the lords of the manor or, if not their ownership, then at least their management (for example, Blackheath, still owned by the Crown, and Barnes Common, still owned by the Church Commissioners). The metropolitan commons are regulated either under this Act or under a special local Act, such as the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act 1871, or the Metropolitan Commons (Mitcham) Supplemental Act 1891. Section 193 of the Law of Property Act 1925 established a public right of access to, and exercise on, metropolitan commons.

The London boroughs are in most cases the managers of commons within their respective areas, and often they are also the freeholder. This is largely due to the fact that London commons had little agricultural or land value, and built development increasingly attracted vigorous local protest; most owners were prepared to sell. In a few cases, the old owner has retained the freehold, for example the Crown holds the freehold of (for example, Bostall Heath and Woods, 1877; Clapham, 1885; Hampstead Heath, 1871; Stanmore, 1888; Tooting, 1875), sometimes for a high price (as in Lord Spencer's sale of Clapham) and sometimes for a nominal sum.

Ecological interest

The ecological value of commons, heaths and greens is often high, either because they contain vestigial remains of a natural habitat, such as heathland or acid grassland, or as a result of the effects of neglect, with natural regeneration and limited public access to areas in which flora and fauna can thrive. There are a number of habitat restoration programmes across London, and the value of many sites is recognised at a local or metropolitan level (for example, Local Nature Reserve) or a national level (for example, SSSI designation).

Historic interest

The historic landscape interest of commons, heaths and greens is complicated. It occasionally resides in their design or ornamental landscaping. Clapham Common, for instance, was subject to ornamental tree planting from 1722 onwards for the benefit of the new gentry villas around it, and notable trees survive from this period today. Mount Pond was for a period incorporated in a private landscape design before being reintegrated into public space. On Wandsworth Common, the owner of Black Sea House on the north side of the Common, a Mr Wilson, created a sheet of ornamental water known as the Black Sea, dotted with 13 islands 'beautified with shrubs and flowers,' although this was filled in during the latter part of the 19th century.[11] In turn, improvements to these sites by the MBW or LCC at the end of the 19th century often introduced a slight but significant layer of exotic tree planting. At Wandsworth again, it is notable that there are avenue plantings of Poplar and London Plane, and planting of Turkey Oaks at notable viewpoints such as junctions of paths.

Image 2 A view of the lake on Tooting Bec Common, 1899-1904. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage.NMR.

This historical layer is often an important, but overlooked, element in the character of these landscapes today. Many sites have had ornamental planting on their boundaries, again mostly dating from the end of the 19th century. Two examples are the avenue planting on the roads across and around Ealing Common and the lines around Richmond Green.

If there is only a limited, albeit significant, layer of deliberate ornamental design, commons, heaths and greens have an important role in representing landscape design. As large open spaces with a rural character, they were frequently included in the views from surrounding houses, and thus influenced the pattern of urban development on their fringes. The views from Blackheath are not formal vistas but have been made into such from key locations around the site where villas were built to capitalise on the views. Blackheath thus becomes the foreground in a landscape designed to be viewed from the villas, or from the Ranger's House on the edge of Greenwich Park.

Likewise, the aesthetic response to the commons was (and is) often framed in terms of vistas to landmarks outside the boundary of the common, for example, the clock tower of the Royal Masonic Institution for Girls adjacent to Wandsworth Common,[12] the towers and spires of the churches around Blackheath (St Andrew's, St John the Evangelist, All Saints', St Mary's, St Margaret's, St Stephen's, Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Alfege), and more recent buildings such as Canary Wharf. Many of these views have since been obscured by further development or by the growth of trees.

Another layer of historical interest is archaeology: the vestiges of the medieval and post-medieval, pre-metropolitan landscape of village settlements and agriculture, including early industrial archaeology such as the dene-holes for chalk-mining on Blackheath and in Bostall Woods, and pre-medieval remains of defensive earthworks, camps and settlements, barrows and tombs. Use as common land has also sometimes served to protect much earlier archaeological remains. Historic Environment Records will identify a number of these, but they remain largely unexamined landscapes.[13]

Another aspect of interest is the historic associations of commons. Sexby goes into considerable detail about, for example, Blackheath's role as a meeting place on the road from Dover to London for celebrations involving royalty or the military. Commons, heaths and greens were natural gathering points and many are rich in social history. In addition, as areas of desirable and prosperous housing, they were often associated with cultural groups, for example, the Clapham Sect of Evangelical Anglicans, which included William Wilberforce, or the Romantic writers, such as Keats, Leigh Hunt and Coleridge, who were associated with Hampstead.

Management and finance

Historically, management of common land was low-key. Prior to the 1866 Act and subsequent public ownership, commons were neither fenced, nor policed, nor lit, their bosky terrain creating hiding places and refuges. Many were famous for their highwaymen: Dick Turpin haunted Blackheath and Shooter's Hill. The history of the use of these places was carnivalesque in its lawless variety including fairs, rallies, gipsy encampments (the

camp on Wandsworth Common was the subject of a famous painting by C R Leslie, R A, around 1830), meetings, and was the abode of prostitutes and criminals. The threat to personal security (as it would now be termed) was for centuries a constant theme in accounts of London's heaths and commons.

Most urban commons and greens are now owned and managed by the local authority, acquired for public open space from the lord of the manor by the MBW, under the Metropolitan Commons Act 1866. Many examples of the schemes of management drawn up under the 1866 Act are preserved in the National Archives.[14] The freeholds passed in due course to the LCC and subsequently to the unitary borough authorities.

Other sites are owned by the local authority but managed by a board of conservators, some are both owned and managed by such a board, some are owned by churchwardens and managed by a statutory committee and some are still privately owned but managed by the local authority or an advisory committee. Further sites were acquired not under the 1866 Act but under the Public Health Act 1875 or the Open Spaces Act 1906.

In the almost complete absence of revenue from agriculture, mineral extraction or sporting interests, the funding for the management of commons is met by a range of sources, although principally they are funded from the annual greenspace budget of local authorities. However, the history of commons means that there is some variation in this. Wimbledon Common is funded by a levy on local residents.[15] Ruislip Woods has received a significant boost from the development of a pub on the shores of its lido, which currently pays a rent of some £65,000 into a ring-fenced budget for management of the Woods. Mitcham is funded by the three adjacent London boroughs, rental income from the late 19th-century golf course and investment income from licences for tipping issued between the 1960s and the 1980s.

Whereas in the case of a park or garden, square or cemetery, design history would afford a clear philosophy for conservation and a vision for management and maintenance, in the case of heaths, commons and greens, design is rare or light. These sites are often both complex and fluid in nature. Within living memory, ad hoc decisions to stop or start mowing, for example, have resulted in major changes of character and appearance. This means that defining a vision and the aims of management is harder, although habitat enhancement in many cases supplies the vision. In each site, other than the smallest and those which have been wholly transformed into parks or gardens, such as Paddington Green, there is a shifting range of management and maintenance regimes.

Moreover, because the character and appearance of commons have rarely been defined, they are subject to a wide range of public perceptions and valuations, as well as other kinds of recreational or development pressures. Misconceptions about what a heath or common should look like, myths of 'the natural', are a frequent and complicated public debate. There is thus a very strong need for the formulation of statements of significance and value as the basis for long-term management plans.

Threats

In their authoritative study, Commons and Village Greens (1967), Denman, Roberts and Smith noted that because of their location, 'all [metropolitan commons] are subject to the pressure of an exceptional demand for spaces for fresh air and exercise', and that 'a dominant note in the public demand for access to the commons is for the provision of facilities for organised public games.'[16] While this may now be tempered by a demand for wildness and nature conservation (see Nicholson Lord, 2004), it has been, and to some extent remains, a significant pressure, especially if extended to include playgrounds as well as sports facilities.

The threat of built development, encroachment and enclosure is now comparatively low, thanks to the Metropolitan Commons Act 1866 and the Commons Registration Act 1965. However, such threats do remain: land taken for the railway across Barnes Common but not utilised is now the subject of residential proposals, and the factory site on Mitcham Common is up for residential redevelopment. Development outside the boundary of these sites, such as a residential development off Frampton Road on the north side of Hounslow Heath, can impinge visually. Road-widening and street improvements also continue to erode boundaries.

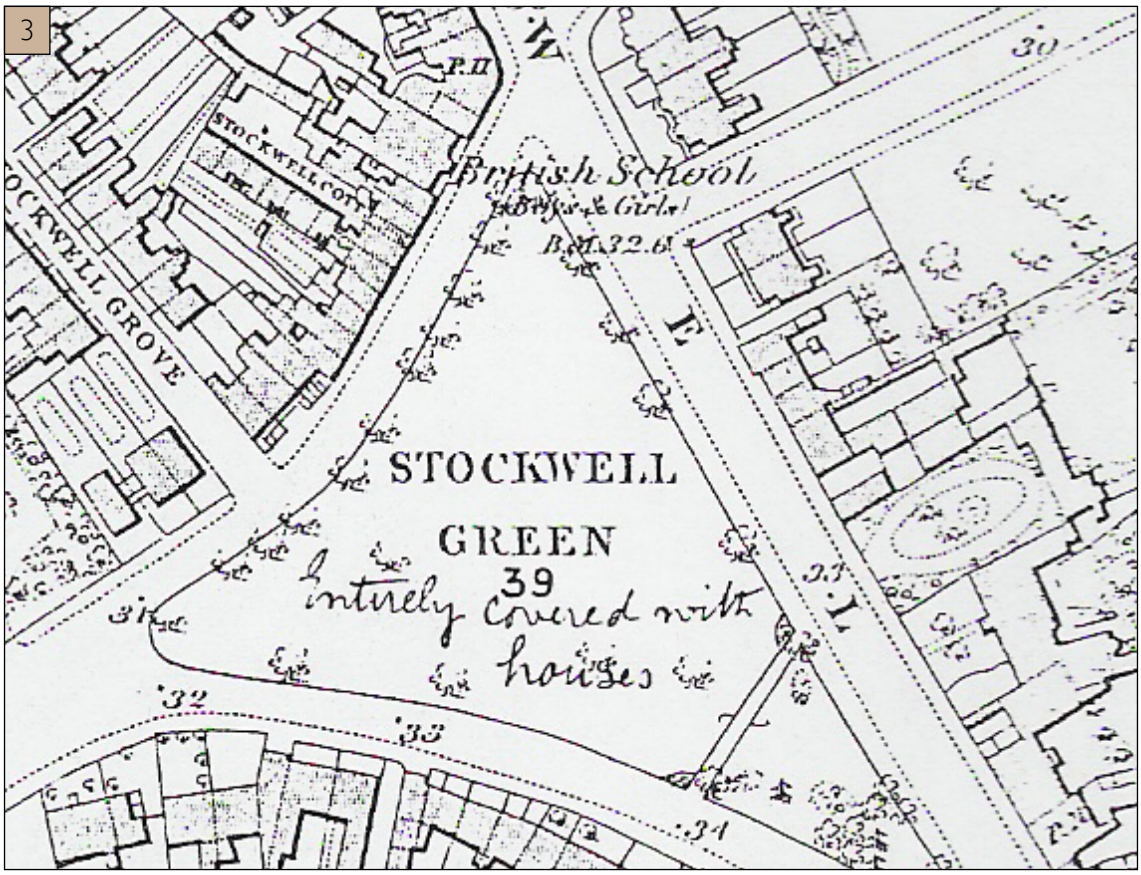

Image 3 Stockwell Green, with a poignant note on the LMA copy of the 1877 OS, 'Entirely covered with houses'. Copyright: reproduced from the 1877 Ordnance Survey Map.

Although it might be tempting to assume that the tidying-up of these sites is a recent phenomenon, the greatest period of 'municipalisation' was the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the MBW and later the LCC first took over management of many of the sites. Sites such as Brook Green or Eel Brook Common, taken over by the MBW in 1881, are now in effect public parks, affording a typically park-like combination of amenity grassland and formal provision for play and sports.

Today though, with far greater awareness of and expertise in ecological management, and a higher value being placed on nature conservation by the public, management is generally much more encouraging towards the semi-natural and the rugged: playing fields have been converted back to meadow grassland at Mitcham Common; playing fields, tips, allotments and an airfield are being restored to heathland at Hounslow Heath; and areas of former amenity grassland are being left to grow long at Wandsworth Common.

Conversely, scrub-growth is often a threat to the habitat value and the historic landscape character of heaths and commons. Just as in 1967, it is often 'especially important to keep the common as open as possible, free from thickets and patches of scrub'.[17] Indeed, with reduced levels of local authority maintenance, this has become a particularly acute threat (see for example Barnes Common and Wandsworth Common).

Commons are also threatened, as are formal parks, by dwindling local authority investment in maintenance and management. This affects not only the physical fabric of sites, for example, in unchecked tree and shrub growth, but also their character, with unsuitable furniture and signage, ad hoc design decisions and unchecked vandalism. Fluctuations in budgets affect these sites just as it does all public green space. As Martin Boyle of Mitcham Common Conservators remarked, the Act gave them duties but no powers to raise income. Again, the 'precarious' arrangements for funding were a cause of concern as long ago as 1967.[18]

Measures to combat crime and the perception of crime also pose a distinct threat to these sites. In contrast to the frequent importance of managing invasive scrub for ecological and landscape-character reasons, in other places, removal of scrub and understorey is being pursued for more utilitarian reasons of surveillance. In 1967, Denman, Roberts and Smith reported that 'there is a tension between the claims of amenity and the need to remove what might be the cause of danger to members of the public. The difficulty is to resolve the conflict between stark openness and a natural, more interesting landscape which makes the policing of the common difficult'.[19] This has become a more acute problem in a contemporary society in which users are more conscious of danger and authorities are more conscious of litigation: hence the outcry over the clearance of scrub on Wandsworth and Tooting Commons in 2004.[20] The key issue may often be one of information, distinguishing where clearance is for nature conservation benefits and where it is for surveillance and ease of maintenance.

The extent to which improvements to the recreational amenities of commons, heaths and greens can be viewed as threats to their character or appearance is a moot point, although erosion of ecological interest is much more measurable. Many improvements, such as sporting facilities, when measured against a definition of historic character or

against indicators of biodiversity, might well be found to be harmful. However, some local authorities are robust in steering such formal development away from their wilder open spaces. The London Borough (LB) of Hounslow, for example, is clear that users value Hounslow Heath for its wildness, and looks to other open spaces to accommodate more formal facilities. On the other hand, it would be hard to justify undoing popular facilities, such as the sports pitches on Wandsworth Common.

Perhaps the most pervasive threat comes from the relentless pressure of urbanisation and standardisation. Wooden finger posts on Monken Hadley Common in Barnet, traditional ox-rails on Clapham Common, wooden box rails on Hampstead Heath and the introduction of bitmac surfacing and concrete kerbs on paths have proved vulnerable to replacement with standard-issue furniture. Highway furniture in and around these sites reduces their quality.

Characteristic, local detailing is being lost every day. In some cases it is being restored: the proposals for the conservation of Richmond Green include resurfacing bitmac paths in rolled or bound gravel, and the use of traditional bollards and rods for boundaries.[21] Wandsworth has used traditional rolled Breedon gravel for paths around its lake.

EXISTING INFORMATION

London Parks & Gardens Trust Inventory

The brief required the study to address 'those spaces in Greater London described as heaths, commons and village greens' (our italics). The main source of information for the purposes of this study is the London Parks and Gardens Trust's (LPGT) Inventory which is a database of parks, gardens, squares, cemeteries and churchyards, first compiled in 1995 and greatly enhanced since that date on a continuing basis. The LPGT database does not correspond exactly with the register of commons, or with habitat surveys, and we have not ventured into the question of legal definitions of common land and village greens. However, for the purposes of this study, it has been agreed that the LPGT inventory should afford a reliable basis for assessing trends and priorities.

This inventory lists some 56 commons, 9 heaths, counting Hampstead Heath and its extension as separate sites, and 66 greens.[22] It further lists 94 cemeteries, public parks and gardens, recreation grounds and private gardens which incorporate part of former common land, heaths and greens. The data, while extensive, are incomplete. For example, insufficient information on area is given to afford a meaningful comparison of the total area of green space in each borough, while definitions as to when a site becomes 'former' are still imprecise, and there is a need for further research on this information base.

Type of site	No
Commons	56
Heaths	9
Greens	66
Sites incorporating former commons	59
Sites incorporating former greens	29
Sites incorporating former heaths	6

The full list of LPGT Inventory heaths, commons and village greens (as of 2005) is included in the Appendices.

Defra

Defra, as the lead Government department, began its work on commons, with a commitment in the Rural White Paper, and culminating in the present Commons Bill announced in the 2005 Queen's Speech, contains no references to urban or metropolitan commons.[23] The Commons Bill, published on 28 June 2005,[24] aims to update the existing complicated laws, encourage the formation of statutory commons associations and allow commoners to obtain funding via agri-environment schemes. It will also stop the loss of common land through deregistration, which occurs when a landowner buys out the commoners' rights, currently threatening about two-thirds of commons in the country. At present, the public has a right of access to only about

20 per cent of the total area of common land, but this is being opened up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

As part of its work on commons, Defra also commissioned the extensive ecological report, *The Common Lands of England – a Biological Survey*, published in 2002. The report on Greater London identifies 122 separate commons, based on the register of commons set up under the Commons Registration Act 1965, with a total area of registered common land of 1,574ha. It notes as well that commons are found throughout the region but a dominant cluster lies between Ealing, Paddington and Richmond. Nearly 38 per cent of the sites are less than 1ha, the majority (53 per cent) between 5ha and 50ha, and 10 sites are over 50ha in size, two being over 100ha. There are 17 sites contiguous with neighbouring commons. In only 14 commons were rights of commons being exercised. At the time of the study, for 13 commons there was no information on ownership, 43 were owned by parish and other councils and 34 had private owners of parts of the land.

In terms of area, 46.5 per cent of the total is associated with woodland and 38 per cent with amenity grassland. Only 4 per cent of the total area is taken up with scrub communities. Semi-natural, broadleaved woodland covers over 41 per cent of the area of Greater London commons. Acidic grassland exists on 27 sites, usually subject to conservation management, neutral grassland on two sites, and marshy grasslands on one. Heathland habitat is a rare survival on London commons, with the notable exceptions of Wimbledon Common, Hampstead Heath, Hayes Common and Keston Common.

The study also drew attention to encroachment, principally by dumping, found on six sites. Among the more common management issues and recommendations, the

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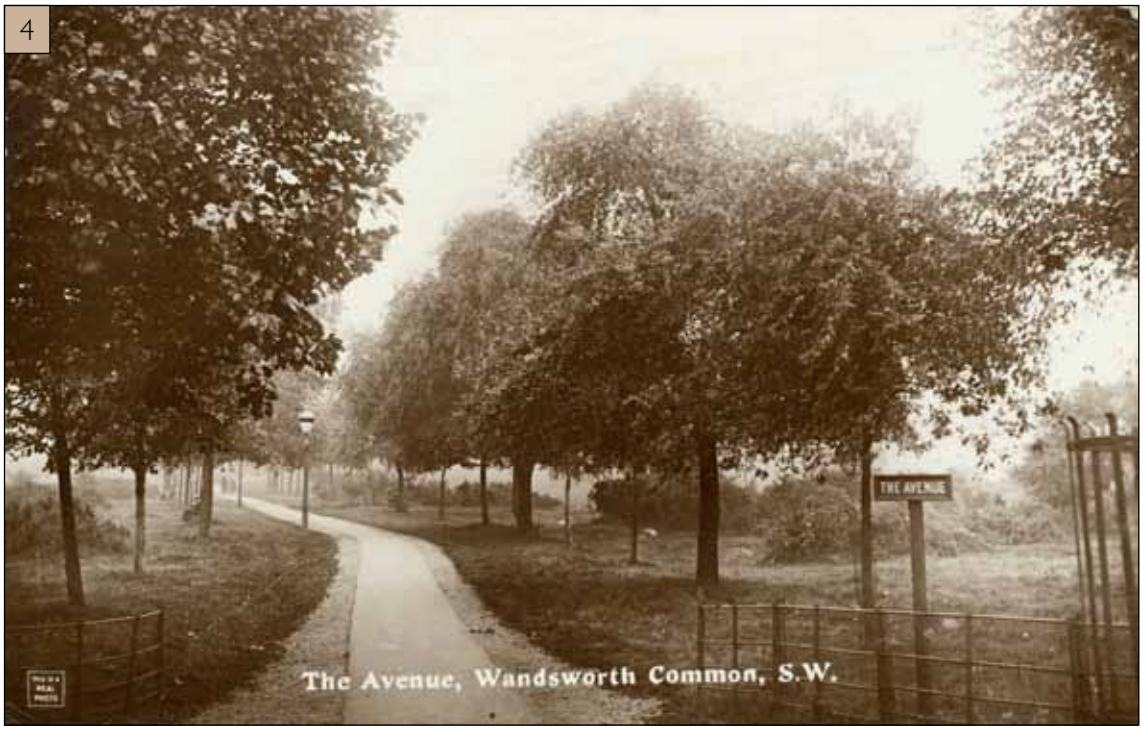

Image 4 A general view along The Avenue, Wandsworth Common, 1913-1918. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage.NMR.

report highlighted management of scrub (30 sites), pond restoration (8 sites), aftercare of planted trees (9 sites), removal of dumping, control of motorbikes and control of Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*).

The study included an inventory and map of all registered common land (including heaths and greens) in the Greater London area.

London Biodiversity Partnership

The London Biodiversity Partnership, steered by the GLA, has produced a number of habitat audits as part of its London Biodiversity Audit. Some of these are relevant to this study: there are habitat audits for woodland, open landscapes with ancient and old trees, acid grassland, chalk grassland, heathland and grassland, meadows and pastures. There are also habitat action plans for woodland, acid grassland, heathland and grassland, meadows and pastures.

The Heathland Habitat Audit (HA6) records 29 sites, totalling 80ha, although this goes down to one heather plant on East Sheen Common. Heathland is defined as habitat characterised by the presence of heather and gorse, usually on free-draining acid soils, a shrub layer of varying height, a scattering of trees and scrub, areas of bare ground and occasional flushes and open water. The terminology is precise and different from that of LPGT and English Heritage. Blackheath, for example, is not included, but Wimbledon Common, Mitcham Common and Richmond Park are. The Acid Grassland Habitat Audit (HA3) does not include an inventory of sites, but refers to examples including Hounslow Heath, Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath. The Woodland Habitat Audit (HA1) likewise does not include an inventory but includes some woodland scrub sites of nature

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Image 5 'Beware of cycles, beware of cycles' – standard highway furniture in Eel Brook Common. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

conservation value, including Bostall Woods and Heath, Lesnes Abbey and Wimbledon Common.

The Mayor of London's Biodiversity Strategy

This plan contains basic information on London's land cover, with green space broken down by percentage into private gardens, parks, golf courses, sports pitches, arable farmland, meadows and pastures, woodland and scrub, waste land, acid grassland and other soft surfaces. It does not afford a borough-by-borough break-down.

National Statistics 2003 Focus on London

The National Statistics report contains an analysis of London's land cover, 1988-1991, with green space broken down by area and percentage into semi-natural grass, mown grass, tilled land, deciduous woodland, other vegetation and other land. The data was taken from the Land Cover Map of Great Britain. It does not afford a borough-by-borough break-down. It analyses non-arable green space as comprising:

- semi-natural grassland 29,000ha, 17 per cent
- mown grassland 13,000ha, 8 per cent
- deciduous woodland 8,000ha, 4 per cent
- other vegetation 5,000ha, 3 per cent

Arable land, deciduous woodland and other vegetation account for 55,000ha or 32 per cent of the land cover of Greater London.

Greenspace Information for Greater London

Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) holds the open space and biodiversity records for London. It is the London Wildlife Trust's Biological Recording Project. GiGL surveying the boroughs on behalf of the GLA, collecting data on open space typology, and preparing a tool to interrogate data holdings in terms of typology rather than habitat as was the case hitherto.

London Parks and Green Spaces Forum

In 2004, the Forum carried out a survey among its members to ascertain the number and area of 'parks sites' in the LBs. At present (2005) this appears to be the most comprehensive data on individual borough-by-borough green space, although two boroughs could not supply any information and there is a considerable difference in the detail which each borough could supply.

English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens

The English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England* has been consulted for heaths, commons and greens, and none in London are currently included.

1876 Act list of commons

The list of commons subject to regulation under the 1876 Act has been consulted and includes none in the Greater London region.

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

Area and numbers

According to Defra, 122 separately identified parcels of land are registered in Greater London under the Commons Registration Act 1965: this figure includes greens and heaths. The total area registered is 1,574ha. (This figure did not include greens and heaths. Defra's 1993 database records 73 Registered Village Greens in Greater London, covering 87.79ha). According to Focus on London: 2003, there are 55,000ha of non-arable green space in Greater London, representing 32 per cent of the total area of the region. Of this green space, registered commons account for nearly 3 per cent by area.

A total of 111 sites are described as heaths, commons or greens on the LPGT database, representing some 4 per cent of the total number of sites included. The discrepancy with the register of common land is small, and can be explained by the number of very small parcels of land under 0.1ha, and the number of separate registrations for land which constitute parts of the same overall site.

Protection

Of the 111 sites on the LPGT database, 73 (72.3 per cent) are covered by Conservation Areas and 35 (34.7 per cent) are designated Metropolitan Open Land but only 13 (12.9 per cent) fall within the Green Belt. There are 16 sites within areas designated by the local authority as being of landscape character significance.

Historic interest

Although none of these sites are on the English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England*, 52 (51.5 per cent) are associated with listed buildings and 4 (3.9 per cent) with scheduled monuments. Four areas of former commonland are registered sites (Wanstead Flats, Richmond Park, The Rookery, Canizaro Park).

Ecological interest

Their ecological interest is much better established. Some 24 per cent are designated of metropolitan importance, 17 per cent are of borough importance and 10 per cent are of local importance. As of 2002, five of London's registered commons, representing 14 per cent of the total area, were designated as SSSIs. The GLA has carried out habitat audits on heathland, woodland, acid grassland and other relevant types and awareness of their conservation needs is relatively well known.

Observable changes

- 43.75 per cent have had notable unplanned tree and scrub growth in the last fifty years

- 87.5 per cent have had formal tree planting schemes in the last hundred years, generally of street trees along boundaries or paths

- 68.75 per cent have lost margins to highway development in the last fifty years, either road widening or formalising of routes

- 47 per cent have had leisure development, such as play areas or visitor centres, in the last fifty years

- 35 per cent have had formal sports provision introduced in the last hundred years. While golf on a common is fairly low-key, tennis courts on small urban spaces such as Brook Green or Eel Brook Common is more dominant

- 58.8 per cent have had car-parking space constructed in the last fifty years. This tends to represent low-key erosion of boundaries

- 70 per cent have had new, bitmac paths constructed

- Bland, municipal furniture and lighting affect almost all the sites visited, generally in medium to poor condition, as is the case with most public green space

- Grass and soil erosion and the creation of desire-line paths likewise affect almost all sites

- Most are affected by the growth of traffic and parking on adjoining roads

SAMPLE SURVEY: REPORTS ON SITE VISITS

The aim of the sample survey was to illustrate observable changes, compare the appearance to that observable on late 19th and mid-20th centuries OS maps. In addition, five sites were selected as case studies and the site managers were interviewed. The findings are presented in the next section.

Given the need to provide a snapshot in a limited amount of time, the Parks Agency Team reduced the 225 LPGT sites to a representative sample, covering the range of different types, geographical spread, size and condition. The information is presented in the form of a brief description of the site, comments on observable changes and a selection of images. Sites were assessed using a simple checklist of types of change. Clearly, whether these changes are for the better or worse is a complicated question requiring further assessment: improvements in security, recreational amenities or access might all be seen as erosion if the historic character is identified as the pre-municipal common, heath or green. Development of scrub and secondary woodland on formerly open sites can be viewed either as natural progression or erosion of rare habitats. Moreover, the process of formalisation had often begun prior to the first edition OS map. More detailed surveys and assessments of individual sites need to be follow-up this rapid overview. Detailed surveys should include study of the National Monuments Record's (NMR) RAF aerial photographs from the 1940s and other resources.

Barnes Common

Barnes Common remains one of the wildest of London's commons. Although drainage, around 1880, reduced its marsh habitats, it retains considerable ecological interest, and is designated as a Local Nature Reserve and a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. The Common is owned by the Church Commissioners, the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's being lord of the manor, but is managed by the LB of Richmond and the Friends of Barnes Common.

In the centre of the Common stands Mill Hill, the site of a former windmill (see also Mitcham Common and Wimbledon Common for comparison), and the original miller's house, now part of Mill Hill Lodge. In the 18th century there was an uninterrupted view of the Rectory and church from Mill Hill, now obscured by trees.[25]

The Common covers about 48.5ha. Today it is much more wooded than in 1870, when the first edition OS map records it as an entirely treeless landscape. By 1948, the original flora of the Common was augmented later in the 19th century by avenues and road-side planting, including London Plane, lime and Horse-chestnut. It contains a wide variety of habitats, with some of the best acid grassland in Greater London, including two vestigial areas of heather. There are some football and cricket pitches on the Common but it is predominantly rural in character. However, the grasslands of Barnes Common are being invaded by scrub woodland, and woodland dominates the southern part of the Common. While this illustrates the natural succession from grassland through scrub to birch and oak woodland, there is a need for management if the grassland is not to be

lost. In the early 1990s, it lost its SSSI status because of the lack of quality in the acid grassland.[26]

Barnes Cemetery was built on a small (0.8ha) enclosure in 1854, but in 1966 this was acquired by the LB of Richmond with a view to laying out a lawn cemetery. The buildings were then systematically demolished and the railings removed.[27] Putney Cemetery, which is well preserved by contrast, is just outside the boundary of the Common, laid out in 1855 on land bought from Lord Spencer.

Management successfully keeps a distinctly rural character intact. Most paths are unsurfaced, and bitmac paths where they exist are low-key in specification; lighting likewise is unobtrusive. There is some impact from road traffic, although scrub has been allowed to develop to help screen this. There is minor vandalism at the eastern, more urban end of the Common. A former coal yard is earmarked for development in the current Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (planning brief issued July 2005), which proposes a station car park and enabling development.

Image 6 View of crossroads on Barnes Common, 1900-1905. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage/NMR.

Image 7 Barnes Common, path from Mill Hill to station, bitmac but unedged. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 8 Barnes Common, Station Road, showing informal treatment of road-edge. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 9 Barnes Common looking south from Mill Hill Road. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Bedfont Green

Bedfont Green is a 1.33ha open space fronting the medieval parish church of St Mary the Virgin and forming the setting of Burlington House to the east. Across Staines Road to the south is a further area of open space which appears to have once been part of a private garden as it has a number of specimen trees, including sequoia, acacia and Red Oak. The Green retains a significant number of mature lime trees to the east, planted along its boundaries in the late 19th century. Immediately south of the church the open aspect to the Staines Road means the traffic has a considerable impact. The Green comprises mown grassland with a scattering of new planting.

The pond south of Burlington House, shown on the 1869 OS map, has disappeared, and a large number of mature Horse-chestnuts were lost in the storm in 1987.

Image 10 Bedfont Green, Burlington House and the site of the former pond. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 11 St Mary's Church across Bedfont Green from Staines Road to the south. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 12 Looking south from Bedfont Green across Staines Road to the additional area. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 13 Bedfont Green, signage, new planting and a bitmac path across the gang-mown grass. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Blackheath

Blackheath has long had free public access, courtesy of the lords of the manor. In the 18th century, Blackheath was covered in gorse which enabled the area to be a dangerous haunt for criminals. This problem continued until the 19th century, when police began to patrol the area and most of the gorse was removed (it was set alight in the 1820s for the amusement of Queen Caroline, wife of George IV). After the gorse was cleared, the Heath was deemed a safer place to live. Building began in earnest around the Heath and gravel, sand and chalk extraction took place within it. The large pits were later in-filled with rubble from bombed buildings after WWII apart from the Vanbrugh Pits, which were left unfilled, and today provide the best impression of what the Heath must have looked like in the 18th century, with gorse, broom and heathland shrubs. During WWII, parts of the Heath were ploughed for food production and other areas had army Nissen huts erected on them, some of which remained until 1953, after which the Heath was levelled and re-seeded. Hare and Billet Pond and Mounts Pond are probably the remains of gravel pits, filled with water. The Prince of Wales Pond, probably made deliberately as a pond, has been used for model boating since the 1850s. The Heath also contains various memorials, including a war memorial and the Gibb Memorial.

In 1871, the management of Blackheath was taken over by the MBW, passing in 1889 to the LCC, and in the 20th century to the two boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich. Ownership, however, remains with the lords of the manor; the Earl of Dartmouth owns the Lewisham section and the Crown owns the Greenwich section. By 1993, both Lewisham and Greenwich Councils adopted a management plan which would encourage wildlife and nature conservation, allowing grass to grow longer with less frequent mowing. A number of groups are actively involved in its preservation and maintenance, combining as the Joint Blackheath Working Party.

Intrusion of traffic is a particular threat to the Heath, not only from vehicles but also from the proliferation of street furniture. Car parking intrudes on the roadside verges of the Heath, as do the setting of historic buildings such as the Ranger's House and the church. A few of the ponds in the Heath appear to be in need of maintenance: Folly Pond has a low water level, while Whitefields Pond is dry. The Prince of Wales Pond is undergoing restoration (2005).

Image 14 General view showing the Ladywell Recreation Ground, Blackheath, 1900-1920. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage/NMR.

Image 15 Blackheath, erosion of verges, multiple surfaces and barriers. Copyright: The Parks Agency

Image 16 Rangers House, Blackheath, Greenwich, London .Copyright: English Heritage/NMR, Photographer / Artist: Derek Kendall

Image 17 Vanbrugh Pits, where the original character of Blackheath is particularly visible. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Bostall Heath

Bostall Heath was formerly one of the wastes of the manor of Plumstead. In 1866, the Heath was enclosed by the Trustees of Queen's College Oxford, the lords of the manor, after a bequest of 1736, but this was later revoked as illegal. In 1878, under the threat of housing development, it was purchased from the lords of the manor by the MBW for £5,500 under the Metropolitan Commons Supplemental Act 1877. A keeper's lodge was built in 1880 and sports facilities were added. The adjacent Bostall Woods estate was acquired from Sir Julian Goldsmith and the joint site was opened to the public on Whit Monday 1893. An area known as Clam Field was later purchased in 1894 and added to the Heath as a recreation ground. In the early 20th century the Heath was described by Sexby, together with the adjoining Woods, as'…the most attractive of the Kentish commons. Indeed we may go so far as
to say that every other common of the Metropolis, with the possible exception of Epping Forest, must yield to them the palm of beauty.' Bostall Heath is now maintained by the LB of Greenwich.

While the Heath retains some of this ambience, it is now abutted to the north and west by a housing development and dumping. Vandalism and fires have increasingly become a problem, with fears that the latter, which continue to smoulder, may flare up and burn the woodland. Although gates have been put in place to deter vehicle access, a number of dumped cars are now trapped in the Heath. The undulating ground is frequently used for cycling. The open areas include gorse, broom and heather, the latter a rarity in the borough.

A number of recently installed robust, cast-iron, embossed information boards provide site history and natural history for the Heath and adjoining Bostall Woods.

Image 18 Parts of Bostall Heath still retain the beauty praised by Sexby. Low-key Boundary and well-managed edge between woodland and grassland. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 19 Significant levels of erosion in Bostall Heath have been caused by cycling in the woods. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 20 Burnt out cars are less of a problem in Bostall Heath since access was blocked but remains still mar the woods. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 21 New housing to the south of Bostall Heath overlooks an eroded setting. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Brook Green

Brook Green was acquired by the MBW in 1881 from the Church Commissioners, having formerly been manorial waste. After its acquisition, it was landscaped and London Planes were planted along its boundaries. The Green forms the setting of the surrounding listed buildings and is the core of Brook Green Conservation Area.

A pond referred to in 1823 has long since disappeared. Since 1948, four tennis courts have been constructed in the central area, and more recently a play area has been constructed adjacent to them on the east. In the early 1990s, a detached parcel of land to the west, originally proposed for a chapel, was incorporated and landscaped with a paved area, seats and rose bushes. Because of its narrow form, Brook Green is dominated by traffic, although the roads have recently been designated for local access only. Road signage and furniture dominates the eastern aspect. The Green is largely amenity grassland, worn and marked with desire line paths such as the saltire cross on the western end. Its boundary is still marked mostly with wooden posts and a metal knee-rail, although there is one length of bow-top railing. The eastern end has a series of fenced enclosures for tennis, a play area and a dog-walking area. The pavement has encroached onto the Green leaving the London Plane trees standing in bitmac.

Image 22 The eastern end of Brook Green, dominated by street furniture. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 23 Brook Green play area, with the tennis courts beyond. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 24 Brook Green tennis kiosk and courts, with municipal furniture and bow-top railings. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 25 The widened pavement has encroached on Brook Green, leaving the trees standing in tarmac. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Clapham Common

Clapham Common was formerly two commons in the neighbouring boroughs of Wandsworth and Lambeth. In the early 18th century it was subject to landscape improvement. From 1722 onward, ornamental planting was funded by subscriptions from local residents. In 1836 a management committee secured a lease from the two lords of the manor. The Common's use increased notably after the conversion of Kennington Common into a park in 1852. Unfortunately there were chronic problems of crime and assault, with only one keeper employed to look after the whole site. The lease expired in 1871. In 1877 the land was purchased by the MBW, which introduced a programme of improvements to the public amenities, including draining, levelling and planting, the provision of sports pitches, a riding avenue, formal paths and allocating the ponds to different uses. In 1890 a reproduction of the bandstand in the Royal Horticultural Society's gardens at Kensington was erected.

Compared to its pre-1877 appearance, the landscape has changed considerably. The Avenue has become the A205 South Circular Road, cutting off the south-western corner of the Common. Windmill Lane has become a highway and a rat-run. Woodland has been allowed to develop where previously the land was open (for example east of the northern end of the A205 as it runs up the western boundary). A number of ponds have been filled in, and others formalised by the LCC. Tree growth has obscured most of the long views across and out of the Common. Since 1948, play areas have been introduced, as well as facilities such as the One o'Clock Club and the pavilion by the Long Pond. The Common has become a major venue for events with an events enclosure north-east of the bandstand erected 10 or more times each summer. Today, the Common is managed by the LB of Lambeth, in partnership with a Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee. Ranger patrols were introduced in 2004. The bandstand and its setting are to be restored with a Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

Clapham Common is an extensively used park: in 2005 the Council banned barbecues, causing much debate. The Clapham Society is adamant that 'Clapham is a common not a park', but the demand for wildness needs to be balanced against the demand for recreational amenities and for security. A management plan has been commissioned and should help to find a balance between the many conflicting demands on the space.

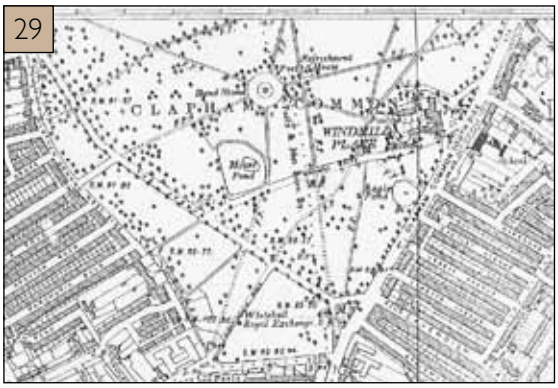


Image 26 General view showing the lake, Clapham Common 1900-1905. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage/NMR.

Image 27 The south end of Clapham Common, 1874, showing an open landscape, pre-A205. Copyright: reproduced from the 1874 Ordnance Survey Map.

Image 28 Cock Pond, Clapham Common, converted to a paddling pool, the same view today. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 29 The south end of Clapham Common, 1948, the A205 now developed along the avenue. Note the great increase in tree-planting and footpaths. The pond in the north has disappeared while the bandstand and kiosk have been built. Copyright: reproduced from the 1948 Ordnance Survey Map.

Image 30 The west end of Windmill Lane, Clapham Common, today, now a rat-run for traffic and linear car park. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 31 Secondary woodland in Clapham Common now offers landscape variety but has its own problems of security and anti-social behaviour. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Clapton Common

Clapton Common, a small fragment of former Broad Common and situated on high ground, was preserved as public open space in 1872, under the Metropolitan Commons Act 1866, as a result of a successful public petition to protect 180 acres of Hackney's common land from encroaching development. The railway arrived in 1872, accelerating building in the area. By then, Clapton Common had long since lost its fine views over the Lea Valley and was already surrounded by housing, generally smart villas and terraces for city merchants and the professional classes. Two examples are Clapton Terrace and Buccleuch Terrace, both having private roads and communal grassed enclosures fronting on to the Common. The enclosure in front of Clapton Terrace is protected under the London Squares Preservation Act 1931. Hackney's common lands were transferred to the MBW in 1872, although it was not until 1881 that the rights were purchased from the lord of the manor. From 1898 the LCC had responsibility for the Common's maintenance and public amenities included a keeper's box and a drinking fountain, neither of which remain. It is now maintained by Hackney Council and is within Clapton Common Conservation Area, designated in 1969.

Clapton Common remains a long lozenge of land divided by roads into a series of areas dwindling to a tip in the south. Mature trees form the perimeter, with close-mown grass areas in between. The path layout has not been changed substantially since the 1870s but surfaces are generally in need of maintenance; the benches, bins, etc, are a mix of dates and styles. No lighting exists other than street lighting and only one CCTV camera was noted. The boundaries are little changed since the 1870s although the adjacent main road to the west is very busy and intrusive.

The largest and better-kept area, evidently most used for recreation by local people, contains the pond, once 'much in demand for skating in the winter'(Sexby). It was also used for yachting in the early 20th century. In recent years, however, the pond has suffered abuse, with much dumping of litter, about which there has been local complaint. Railings were installed within the last five years following a programme of improvements, including clearing of duck weed which had come to entirely cover the surface (piles of this weed blocked a footpath on our visit). Good willows overlook the pond, which now has numerous seats and bins, although the presence of the latter does not appear to prevent littering. Adjacent to the pond, two huts presumably for refreshments appear to be disused, although recently creosoted, and have been vandalised. The mid-to-late 20th century mock Tudor-style block of public conveniences in the triangle of land between Spring Hill and Upper Clapton Road has been boarded up and derelict for some years, surrounded by scrubby vegetation, trees and wire fencing. The southern tip is ill-kept, containing areas of scrub with dumped rubbish, potentially encouraged by the nearby, unsightly recycling area. Tarmac strips divide the line of trees that ends the Common to the south, which once was grass. Boundary posts around the whole Common are in a poor state in places.

The only site information is a Hackney Parks sign with the name of the Common. There were moves by local people in 2004 to establish a Clapton Common Initiative as a means of improving it.

Image 32 Clapton Common pond, which was railed in recent years. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 33 Rubbish dumped around recycling bins on the edge of Clapton Common. Copyright: The Parks Agency

Image 34 New tree planting on Clapton Common. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 35 Clapton Common, graffiti on kiosk. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Ducketts Common

Ducketts Common is sited on former common land in the manor of Ducketts, first referred to in the late 13th century, and is all that remains of the 138-acre Ducketts Farm. The common land once flanked Green Lanes (an ancient route for the fields that lined it prior to the arrival of the railway) between Alderman's Bridge to the north and West Green. Housing development eroded the extent of Ducketts Common north of Turnpike (formerly Tottenham) Lane. Today the area of the Common, in two parts either side of Green Lanes, is consistent with that of about 1900 when Tottenham UDC began to improve it, essentially transforming it into a recreation ground. The Common is maintained by Haringey Council and is within Finsbury Park Neighbourhood.

The early 20th-century improvements in the larger rectangular area west of Green Lanes took the form of two tar-paved paths, wrought-iron railings, and planting of 140 trees. The latter included London Planes and a few lime trees around the perimeter and either side of the paths, many of which remain together with a few apparently pre-dating these improvements. The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association (MPGA) provided a further 12 trees in 1912. Recreational facilities in this area have changed over the years. By 1935, two tennis courts were provided, they were later transformed into other facilities. The tennis court to the south became a children's playground in 1989. It is now substantially extended with a large fenced-off area for children, containing a small pergola, seating and picnic tables, new trees and shrubs and a Toddlers Maze in bricks set in the grass. The northern tennis court has been converted to basketball courts and is well used. Some improvements to the park infrastructure have evidently taken place in recent years with brick-edged paths, new seats and bins and a new gateway at the northern end. Part of the northern area is temporarily taken for refurbishment of Turnpike Lane Station.

The smaller triangular area east of Green Lanes is unenclosed and was laid out by 1914 with curving paths and beds for shrubs and formal bedding. Although the remnants of this layout exist, it is in a very poor state, much overgrown and with broken tarmac paths. There is no information about the history of the site as a former Common.

Image 36 North entrance of Ducketts Common with recent improvements and temporary construction site Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 37 Ducketts Common, well-used basketball courts in what is essentially a public park. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 38 Poorly maintained paths and remains of earlier layout in eastern section of Ducketts Common. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 39 Ducketts Common playground, with graffiti on fence. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Ealing Common

Ealing Common was purchased by the Ealing Local Board from the landowner, the Bishop of London, in 1878. In the late 19th century, after the arrival of the railway, suburban development spread around the Common, although there was little encroachment on the Common itself. The roadsides are lined with Horse-chestnuts planted by the Local Board and there are extensive remnants of white metal posts and rails dating from 1887. On the south side of the Common, grass has for several years been grown for a hay crop.

In 1904, the road across the Common was widened by 10 feet and a new footpath was created along the south-eastern side of the road. During WWII, much of the Common was dug up for allotments. There has been minor encroachment to form parking spaces, and stretches of the original boundary rails have been lost. The cycle route across the Common is welcome but its surfacing, lighting, road-marking and kerbs are all to highway standards.

Image 40 Ealing Common with people in the park and passing traffic, 1902-1907. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage/NMR.

Image 41 The former highway alongside Ealing Common which was downgraded to a cycle route. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 42 Mature Horse-chestnuts on Ealing Common reduce the impact of the surrounding roads. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 43 Looking towards Grange Park with cut hay in the foreground, mature Horse-chestnut trees and remnants of the traditional boundary rails. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Eel Brook Common

Eel Brook Common was well established as a recreational space in the early 19th century: it is recorded as Fulham Park on a map of 1841. It was finally purchased by the MBW in 1881. A bandstand had been built by 1894. In 1921, cricket and football pitches were provided, and later in the 1920s, two tennis courts were constructed. Also dating from the early 20th century are a wooden shelter and a lodge, last used as a café and now boarded up. Formal paths had been constructed by 1948. Two play areas have since been built. A nursery school built on the site of former public conveniences was demolished in 2003, and two multi-use sports pitches were installed, together with new paving, planting and grass areas at the entrance from Effie Road. The entrance from the New Kings Road has also been upgraded with anti-motorcycling gates and new surfacing, which has widened the pavement into the park.

Image 44 Eel Brook Common. New recreational facilities at the northern end of the park. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 45 Vandalised former lodge and café, New Kings Road, Eel Brook Common. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 46 Eel Brook Common, early 20th century shelter. Note also that the path has been converted to a cycle route with markings, lighting and signage. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 47 New paving and entrance to Eel Brook Common from New Kings Road. Note the anti-motorcycling barrier. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Eltham Common

Eltham Common and the neighbouring Shooters Hill Woodlands were once notorious haunts for highwaymen and other robbers. In the north-west corner of the Common is the site of a gibbet where criminals were publicly hung and their bodies left to decay as a caution to others. This was apparently an unsuccessful tactic since it became the practice for robbers to charge for safe passage across Shooters Hill. The Common was used for archery, probably the origin of the name Shooters Hill. The land was purchased by the Office of Woods and Forests in 1812 and used by the War Department, although public access was permitted. In the early 20th century Woolwich Borough Council and the LCC applied to take over the site, but it was not until 1938 that nearly 13ha of the Common were transferred under Green Belt laws.

It is now maintained by the LB of Greenwich and is in an Area of Special Character of Metropolitan Importance, while the wooded area is part of a wider Nature Conservation Area of Metropolitan Importance, covering the adjacent ancient and secondary woodland.

Eltham Common is shown as a roughly rectangular area of open land on the first edition OS map, but has increasingly become secondary woodland on its eastern side. The open grassland is largely mown with longer grass to the periphery. The path shown along its southern boundary is now subsumed into the woods. Christ Church, built in 1855–6, and an adjacent primary school in the north-east corner on Shooters Hill, are now surrounded on three sides by woodland. The police station in the north-west corner is now boarded up. Traffic on the busy Well Hall Road and Shooters Hill intrudes on the Common's edges. The Green Chain Walk passes through the Common with some information boards describing the site's history.

Image 48 Eltham Common, verge with Well Hall Road, showing low-key path and scrub-growth. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 49 Dumping in the woodland of Eltham Common. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 50 Eltham Common information board and litter bin: note also grassland management and encroachment of woodland. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Feltham Green

Feltham Green is the remnant of Feltham Common. Much of this had been encroached upon for agricultural use before 1869. The area remained predominantly rural until the 1920s, although the arrival of the railway in 1847 led to house-building.

The Green was radically changed by the widening of the High Street in the mid-1960s, and by the development of the shopping precinct on the west side of the road and subsequently the New Chapel Square development. A retaining wall now forms the western boundary of the open space. This affords a formal promenade overlooking the Green and a pond, the former recently improved with new paving and seating. An island has been created in the pond since 1869, and the open space is now managed as a small formal park. On the east side, a row of older houses is accessed by an unmade road, with a less formal boundary to the Green, encroached upon by parking. Recent landscaping at the northern end includes new path surfaces, new tree-planting, a dog-free enclosure and new benches.

Image 51 West boundary of Feltham Green with Feltham High Street. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 52 Feltham Green from Feltham High Street, showing formal landscaping and new planting. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 53 Redundant cattle trough on the eastern edge of Feltham Green. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 54 Feltham Green's more informal eastern boundary.parking has nibbled at the edge of the Green. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Goose Green

Formerly the centre of East Dulwich hamlet and once part of the manor of Camberwell Friern, Goose Green is likely to have been part of more extensive common land stretching from Peckham Rye which, over the centuries, had gradually been enclosed for private use. The site of Rectory Farmhouse appears to be under the Vicarage of St John's Church, which faces the Green on its north side. Goose Green, along with Peckham Rye Common and Nunhead Green, was purchased from the lord of the manor by Camberwell Vestry in 1868 in order to prevent development from taking place after the matter was taken to the House of Commons. In 1882 these three areas of common land were sold by the Vestry to the MBW for £1,000, later passing to the LCC. By then, Goose Green possessed, according to Sexby, 'no rusticity beyond its name,' the geese having long gone. It is now maintained by the LB of Southwark.

Since 2002 there has been a programme of capital investment, with new paths, benches and landscaping. This has been done lovingly but has reinforced its character as a small park rather than anything more rustic.

Image 55 Community mural illustrating William Blake's vision on Peckham Rye, Goose Green. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 56 Surrounding traffic encroaches on Goose Green, while tree-growth has hidden most views of the church. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 57 Hard landscaping in the playground as part of recent improvements to Goose Green. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 58 New formal path and benches on Goose Green. The bench to the right has already been burnt out. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Hampstead Heath

Hampstead Heath has a long-documented history. A Saxon charter and the Domesday Book (1086) mention the 'great ditch', and a royal charter of 1227 refers to woods and heath enclosed on all sides by ditches which, along with boundary oaks and stones, are still visible. The Heath has a unique variety of habitats including ancient woodland, meadows, wetland, hedgerows, parkland and 26 ponds, some of which were made to supply London with water. In the 19th century, when the city was growing rapidly, Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson, lord of the manor of Hampstead, wishing to exploit his position on the fringes of built-up London, planned East Park Estate on the Heath, but he failed to obtain parliamentary authority for the enclosure of his land.

In 1871, the MBW purchased the manorial rights for the public, in perpetuity, acting under the Hampstead Heath Act. The Heath at that stage covered 240 acres. In 1889, the MBW's responsibility for the Heath passed to the LCC. The Hampstead Heath Protection Society was formed in 1897 and has been active ever since, its name later changed to the Heath and Old Hampstead Society.

In 1884, George Shaw-Lefevre MP, who had established the Commons Preservation Society in 1866 and was instrumental in preserving Hampstead Heath in 1871, began fund-raising to extend the Heath. One of the desired extensions was Parliament Hill, then part of the Kenwood estate, enclosed and used for grazing. The Hampstead Heath Enlargement Act was passed in 1886 and in 1889 Parliament Hill was acquired by the MBW as an extension to the Heath. Ponds on Parliament Hill Fields had facilities for bathing, fishing, model yachting and skating. Level ground was used for sports such as cricket, tennis, football, hockey, golf, lacrosse and other sports. There was a bandstand in a hollow and a refreshment house and lavatories were provided. The Lido, added around 1938, is one of four built by the LCC still surviving. The undulating ground has numerous scattered trees and a network of paths, with good views from the summit. Hampstead Heath Extension was acquired from Eton College in the early 20th century. Other additions to the Heath are the grounds of the Kenwood estate, added in 1924, and Hill Garden and Pergola, added in 1959; in addition, Golders Hill Park abuts the Heath.

The Heath falls within two London boroughs, the largest proportion being in Camden. Since 1989 the Heath, now covering 791 acres, has been managed by the Corporation of London (Kenwood being managed by English Heritage). A revised management plan was published in January 2001.

The single greatest change in the Heath's character has come from the growth of trees and shrubs on areas that were previously open. This has had a significant impact on its character, as well as on long views. The municipal character of some 19th-century improvements has been subsumed in a generally more natural character. In addition, the Heath exhibits a wide range of furniture, accrued over the years, some attractive, some utilitarian. Many previously informal paths have been tarmacked. Car parking provision is fairly discreet, but traffic adversely affects peripheral areas.

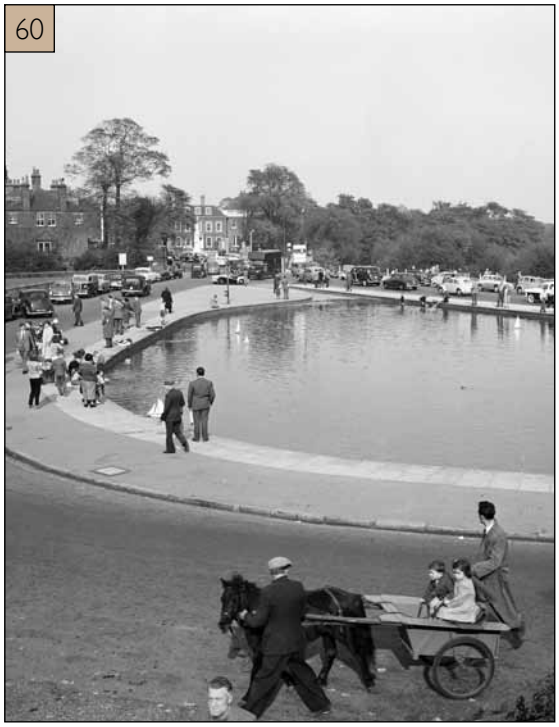


Image 59 Hampstead Heath contains a wide range of habitats, grassland, woodland and mowing regimes. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 60 Two children having a pony and trap ride on the road beside Whitestone Pond, while in the background people stand at the edge of the pond and cars drive by on the far side. Photographed by John Gay, late 1950s.Copyright: English Heritage/NMR.

Image 61 Hampstead Heath, Whitestone Pond's character and setting have been physically eroded by traffic and highway improvements. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 62 Car-parking on the edges of Hampstead Heath- low-key but still a distinct change. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Hampton Court Green

Hampton Court Green is adjoined by Bushy Park to the west, Hampton Court House to the north and fronts on to Hampton Court Palace to the east. It originally extended to the river but from the late 17th century this frontage was enclosed for development associated with the Palace. Hampton Court House was built in 1757.[28] By 1869, cavalry barracks had been built at the far western end of the Green adjacent to Bushy Park, although these were demolished by 1949. The Green was criss-crossed with footpaths until 1949. Around 1900, a row of mature Horse-chestnuts was planted along Hampton Court Road and Hampton Court Way.

Today, the south-eastern end is dominated by the traffic junction of Hampton Court Road and Hampton Court Way; a wall has recently been built to protect the pavement outside the Green. The site of the cavalry barracks has been developed as a car park for the Palace, and a new gravel path has been constructed inside the trees along Hampton Court Road. Scrub and tree growth now completely obscures Hampton Court House and its grounds. Only one footpath remains, crossing the Green from east to west.

Image 63 Junction at south-east corner of Hampton Court Green. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 64 Mature Horse-chestnuts along Hampton Court Road. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 65 The new car park, Hampton Court Green. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 66 The entrance to the car park from Hampton Court Road. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Havering-Atte-Bower Village Green

The Green was acquired as public open space by Romford UDC in 1935, and is now maintained by the LB of Redbridge. It is within a Conservation Area, and also within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Havering Ridge Area of Special Character.

The area remains largely rural and the Green retains its village atmosphere, thanks to the presence of the church of St John the Evangelist and its churchyard, which has a low wall separating it from the Green. Part of the churchyard wall has been replaced by chain-link fencing. The late 17th–early 18th-century village stocks and whipping post are now set within railings, and there is a row of listed late 18th-century timber-framed cottages. The Green is largely unenclosed to the main road, but unsightly posts and rails and a gate separate the east boundary from the roadway fronting on to the old cottages. A line of Horse-chestnut trees was planted along the border of North Road to commemorate the Queen's coronation year (1953), and a seat, now gone, was put near the west side. One oak has a circular metal seat of recent date. The site of a former ducking pool, to the east, is marked by a hollow in the ground across North Road, where rushes grow, indicating damp ground. The only site history information is on a plaque by the stocks.

Image 67 Site of the old ducking-pond, Havering-atte-Bower Village Green. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 68 The paths of Havering-atte-Bower Village Green show signs of repeated poor quality patching. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 69 The stocks and St John's church, Havering-atte-Bower Village Green. The stocks have recently been enclosed with standard bow-top railings. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 70 Havering-atte-Bower Village Green, long-unrepaired damage to the churchyard wall, replaced with wire mesh and concrete posts. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Mitcham Common

In response to public concern about gravel extraction and other development threats, Mitcham Common was secured by an act of parliament in 1891, which established a board of conservators to manage the site. The board currently employs a director and an assistant, and two estate workers. It is funded by contributions from the LBs of Merton, Croydon and Sutton, rental from a golf course and income from investment of money derived from licensing of gravel extraction.

Although the Common's boundaries are roughly unchanged since the 1870s, road development such as the widening of the Croydon Road (A236), and the construction of roads running from north to south across the Common (for example Cedar Avenue, built since 1951), have effectively subdivided it into discrete parcels of land. Railway development, including a depot at Beddington Lane, has also cut up the Common. The land south of Croydon Road was converted to a public golf course in the 1890s. At the same time, the northern part of the Common continued to be extensively worked for gravel until the early 1980s. This area was also used for playing fields. The long period of gravel extraction and the subsequent landfill and tipping have greatly altered the original flat landscape.

In the 20th century, ponds were in-filled, land was ploughed as part of the WWII war effort and anti-aircraft gun emplacements were constructed on the Common. The enclosure, now occupied by a factory on Commonside East, has grown since the factory was a rubber works in the 1870s. The former windmill and miller's house, early-to-mid 19th century, were bought by Whitbread in 1994 and a new ecology centre was built beside the converted and extended house. Mitcham's village pond at the northern point of the Common has been cut off from the Common by Three Kings Road to the south since 1951. The pond itself has recently been landscaped but has lost much of its character as a result of the adjacent road traffic. The northern part of the Common is now a recreation ground.

However, between Commonside East and the A236, east of Cedar Avenue, the Common has a wilder character. This is not a case of retaining an original character so much as having secured one by good conservation management in the recent past. Former gravel workings have been landscaped to create new habitats, and since tipping ended, careful conservation management has maximised the ecological benefits. Playing fields have been returned to grassland, ponds and wetland have been created and scrub has been selectively encouraged along boundaries to
vary the habitat and to screen the traffic and the surrounding housing. Threats continue with the residential redevelopment of the old factory site and proposals for a Transco pipeline across the Common.

Image 71 Land at the southern end of Mitcham Common raised as a result of tipping in the 1960s-80s. Note visually intrusive development beyond the boundary. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 72 Entrance to Mitcham Common from Commonside East: gorse re-growth on former playing fields, with attractive local metal marker post Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 73 The remains of the 1805 windmill, Mitcham Common: to the right, the mill house, now a pub, to the right the new ecology centre. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 74 The pond at the northern end of Mitcham Common, recently landscaped but its character eroded by roads and hard-surfacing. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Mitcham Green

Mitcham Green, or Upper Green as it was formerly known, is the central green of what was the village of Upper Mitcham. Mitcham attracted industrial development as early as the 18th century because of its position on the river Wandle. This was followed by a rapid expansion around 1900 and its population doubling to 29,606 in the first decade of the 20th century. A short row of limes on the south side may be the remains of more extensive formal planting from the late 19th century.

The area of the Green has been severely eroded by the widening of roads around and through it. The most notable impact today is the A236 which runs around its west and south sides. Broad tarmac paths have been formed to accommodate pedestrian through-traffic. A recent landscaping scheme includes new tree planting, but the site is heavily used and physically eroded by footfall.

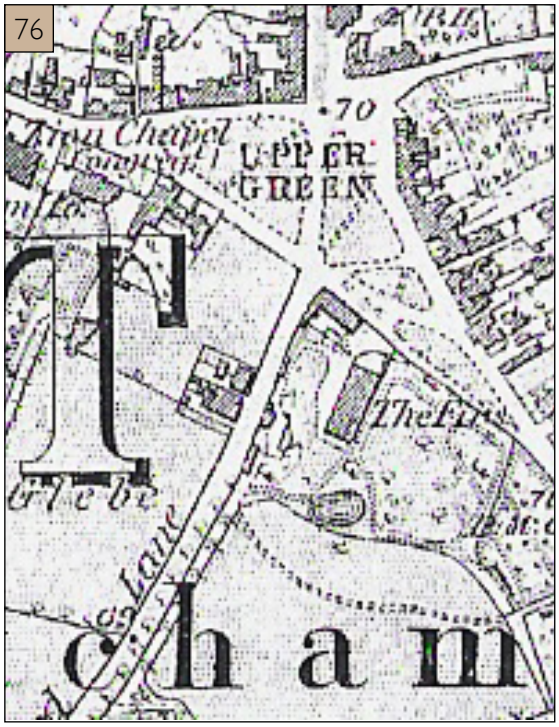


Image 75 Recent landscaping has attempted to screen the A236 on Mitcham Green. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 76 Mitcham Green in 1871. The pond in the north corner of the Common visible bottom right. Copyright: reproduced from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map.

Image 77 Remnants of 19th century formal tree-planting, now cut off from Mitcham Green by the A236. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 78 Café on Mitcham Green, desire-line path, and no sense of enclosure at the boundaries. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Nunhead Green

Nunhead Green was part of the common land acquired by the local Vestry, which transferred to the MBW and eventually to the LCC. When transferred to the LCC, the Green comprised 1.5 acres. Sexby described it in 1905 as 'no longer green' and 'tar-paved … thus form[ing] a convenient playground for children.' The first edition OS map shows it as a lozenge, with a small detached area at the south-west end separated from the rest by the road. These shapes remain unchanged, the latter now a low, raised grassed area with two small trees as a result of a recent renovation project. The OS map of 1950 shows trees only at each end of the lozenge and on the small adjacent area. It is not known when the tarmac Sexby referred to was replaced by grass.

The Green retains something of its village atmosphere, through the presence of the Metropolitan Beer and Wine Trade Association almshouses which overlook it. In 2002, the main area was divided into two distinct parts, with some trees planted. In the last three years it has been improved considerably under Southwark's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, with new layout and railings, picnic tables and trees planted along the perimeter and by a path. A separate dog area to the north is railed off with a rose hedge and other shrubs along its northern railing. Trees are planted along the railings to the main road. There are new Nunhead Residents notice boards, but no site history.

Image 79 Recent landscape improvements on Nunhead Green with new trees, play equipment and furniture. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 80 Part of the same recent programme of improvements on Nunhead Green. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 81 The contemporary context of Nunhead Green, showing island bed to the west. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 82 New landscaped dog area on Nunhead Green. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Peckham Rye Common

Peckham Rye Common was bought by the Vestry of Camberwell in 1868 after the lord of the manor of Camberwell Friern had proposed residential development. It was subsequently purchased by the MBW, along with Nunhead Green and Goose Green. Peckham Rye Park was laid out in 1894 on the adjacent Homestall Farm after it had been acquired jointly by the Vestry, the LCC and the Charity Commissioners.

The northern area has been improved in the last five years with a tarmac path and replanting of vegetation and trees around an old pond, later a bathing pool. An early 20th-century postcard of Peckham Rye Pond shows it with low railings and surrounded by people. Remains of a swimming pool fountain survive in the grass. To the extreme north is a raised planter with roses. The area beyond the site of the pool is railed to the road and has mown grass, perimeter trees and scattered trees of various species, including willow. The far northern end of the main Common comprises very recent hard landscaping forming an entrance, with a Horse-chestnut avenue along the path plus a few randomly planted trees. The paddling pool is rather ill-kept, with broken brickwork on the surround. There is an unsightly recycling centre, and an area taken up with building works (presumably in connection with Peckham Rye Park HLF restoration). Minimal information is provided apart from a name sign with the Southwark Parks telephone number. There is local concern that the dissolution of the Southwark Park Rangers may affect park safety and maintenance. The Friends of Peckham Rye Park was formed in 1995 and is also concerned about the Common.

Image 83 People fishing and strolling along Peckham Rye Pond, 1900-1920. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage/NMR.

Image 84 Entrance to Peckham Rye Common from East Dulwich Road with recent hard landscaping. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 85 Peckham Rye Common paddling pool, in need of maintenance. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 86 Peckham Rye Common – three new trees, all vandalised. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Richmond Green

Richmond Green is owned by the Crown Estate and managed by the LB of Richmond. Surrounded by rows of mature trees and historic town houses, it is the core of Central Richmond Conservation Area, and has been described by Pevsner as 'one of the most beautiful urban greens surviving anywhere in England'. It comprises a large grass space of 4.8ha, criss-crossed by paths little changed since the earliest maps, and is a highly popular venue for cricket and informal recreation.

In 2001, the Green was the subject of a landscape assessment by Kim Wilkie Associates, which flagged up a number of issues for its long-term health and structure. The report looked at landscape character, history and surrounding uses. It assessed in turn landscape condition and movement, traffic and surfaces, putting forward options and making a recommendation on each issue. It then set out a way forward addressing consultation, funding and maintenance. Recommendations included needing a long-term strategy for replanting the mature trees, paving all paths in rolled or bound gravel, decompacting and reseeding areas under trees with shade-tolerant grass, surfacing surrounding pavements with York stone, resurfacing adjacent roads with a tar-spray and chip finish, reducing parking and rationalising furniture – benches, dog-bins, bicycle racks, lighting – and street signage. Although Richmond Green is an unusually well-resourced and much appreciated site, all greens would benefit from such a systematic approach to their future management and maintenance.

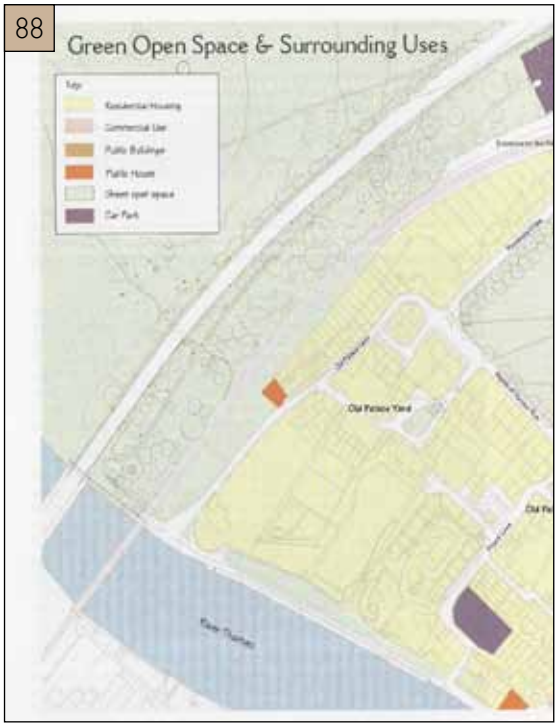


Image 87 Cricket on Richmond Green, with its surrounding trees and historic buildings. Copyright: Kim Wilkie Associates, 2001.

Image 88 Landscape Assessment of Richmond Green. An analysis of surrounding buildings and green spaces. Copyright: Kim Wilkie Associates, 2001.

Image 89 Richmond Green from the east corner looking west, October 2001.Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 90 Richmond Green looking south, October 2001. Copyright: The Parks Agency

Sidcup Green

Although the area remained largely undeveloped until the late 18th century, Sidcup Green was recorded as common land in the tithe return for Chislehurst. It has also been known as Place Green. Part of the common land had been encroached on in the late 18th century when Charles Minshaw built Place Green House, which faces the Green from the north. This has since been renamed the Manor House and is in Bexley Council's ownership, used as a registry office. The Manor House, now listed, is fronted by an area of landscaping with ornamental beds in lawn facing the Green. The Green is maintained by the LB of Bexley and is in a Conservation Area.

The Green itself appears little changed in its extent over the last century and is comprised of well-mown grass with trees along its east and west sides. A raised bank forms the southern boundary and is planted with a line of well-grown lime trees, beyond which are the grounds of Sidcup Place, now a public park. A 20th-century war memorial with ornamental planting faces the Manor House.

Image 91 Sidcup Green-note treatment of verges and effect of gang-mowing on woodland edge. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 92 The War Memorial on Sidcup Green. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 93 Sidcup Green from the Manor House, showing mature lime trees on the boundary with Sidcup Place. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Stoke Newington Common

Stoke Newington Common, once known as Cockhanger Green, was owned by the lord of the manor of Hackney; its use for pasturage was allowed throughout the year. Stoke Newington was a village until the 17th century, when grand houses began to be built. Sanford Terrace to the west of the Common, fronted by a strip of land, was built in the late 18th century. Development in the 19th century saw strips around the edge of the Common enclosed for private use. The Common changed dramatically when the Great Eastern Railway Company built its Enfield branch line, under the Metropolitan Station and Railways Act 1864. A plot of land equal to that taken for the railway was given in compensation in the south-west corner, and another compensatory parcel was added in the south by the end of the 19th century. In 1872, following the Metropolitan Commons Act 1866, Stoke Newington Common, by then reduced to 5.5 acres, was preserved as a public open space as a result of a successful public petition to protect 180 acres of Hackney's common land from encroaching development. These lands were transferred to the MBW, although it was not until 1881 that the rights were purchased from the lord of the manor. From 1898 the LCC had responsibility for the Common's maintenance, and over the years provided paths, seating, planting, fencing and a play area, the latter no longer in place. By the late 1950s a memorial drinking fountain had been installed in the eastern tip, now broken. The Common is maintained by Hackney Council.

Stoke Newington Common's distinctive triangular shape has long been obscured by the railway cutting running roughly from north-west to south-east, creating two distinct areas of green space. The whole Common is surrounded by roads and local bus routes; traffic is noticeably intrusive in the western section abutting the busy Rectory Road. Each area has mown grass, with mature, semi-mature and younger trees, crossed by tarmac paths. In recent years shrub beds have been planted on either side of the railway cutting. The larger, eastern triangular area has mature trees, predominantly London Plane with some lime, and other semi-mature and young trees generally on the perimeter. A tarmac path crosses from north to south and another runs from the eastern tip parallel to Northwold Road. Although the drinking fountain is in need of repair, the paths are relatively good. An annual rolling programme by Hackney Council commenced in January 1999 to provide replanting of grass verges, paths, painting and refurbishment of railings, new benches, picnic tables, litter and dog bins. However this programme has been affected by Hackney's budget crisis. The rectangular western section has fewer mature trees but perimeter trees have now been planted.

There is an active Users Group under the auspices of Kyverdale Area Action Group, formed in 2000, which has erected an attractive sign providing local history, points of contact and regulations. Future plans range from improving cleanliness and restoring the drinking fountain to establishing a playground, basketball and skateboarding facilities, and covering over the railway cutting to form a 'green bridge' which would reconnect two large sections of the common. The Hackney-wide Tree Musketeers Group has planted over 60 trees of a variety of species since 1998–9, each well protected by a tree-guard and maintained by the Group; boards provide an informative list and plan of all the trees on the Common. Nearby is the Green Link route between Stoke Newington and Abney Park Cemetery.

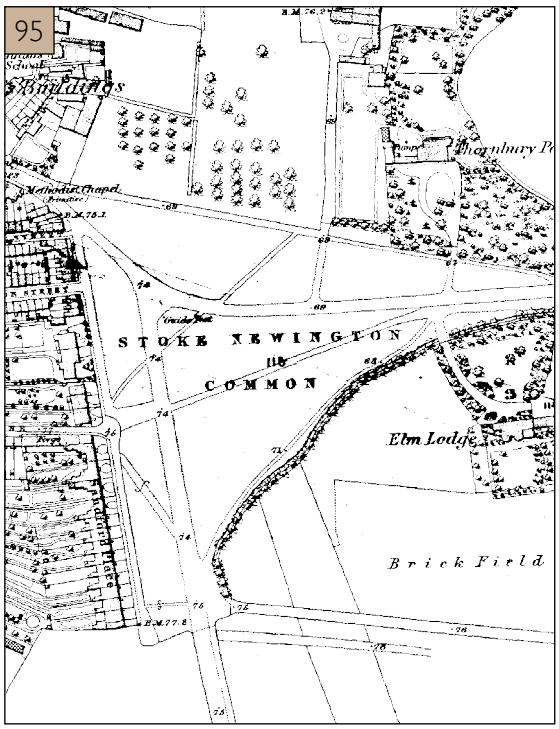


Image 94 Stoke Newington Common has a well-used public park. The broken drinking fountain is scheduled for repairs. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 95 Stoke Newington Common prior to the encroachment of the railway. Reproduced from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map.

Image 96 Stoke Newington Common, litter, dumped ready for collection. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 97 Tree-trail information board, Stoke Newington Common. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Turnham Green

Turnham Green is a roughly triangular piece of ground on the south side of Chiswick High Road. In 1841-3 Christ Church was built on the Green: the space was bisected from north to south by a road past the west end of the church (Town Hall Mall). The north side of the churchyard was planted with limes, as was the boundary to Chiswick High Road. In 1873, a pond is shown on the west side of the Green but this had been filled in by 1948. Also by 1948, a triangle of land at the eastern end was cut off by the widening of the road accessing Heathfield Terrace overlooking the south side of the Green, and likewise at the eastern end, a footpath was upgraded to a road to access the Terrace. In 1913, the Church Hall was built on the south-west corner of the Green after objections were made to it being built on the Green itself. A war memorial has been erected at the eastern end of the Green.

Since 1948, public conveniences have been built in the north-west corner of the Green (now boarded-up). Traffic on Chiswick High Road has a notable impact on the north of the Green. The churchyard enclosure was recently removed, except for the gate piers, to leave the church sitting directly on the Green. Sections of boundary railings have been removed and Town Hall Mall is now used for parking. There has been some additional post-war and 1960s planting, such as the cherry trees along the path from the church to the north-west corner. There is evidence of low-level vandalism.

Image 98 Municipal landscaping from the post-war period, looking to the north-west corner of Turnham Green. Vandalised litter bin and boarded-up WCs. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 99 Turnham Green, Christ Church with its boundary limes to the north, and its churchyard removed. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 100 War memorial in the eastern corner of Turnham Green. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 101 Turnham Green-incomplete boundary railings along Town Hall Mall and post-war planting. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Wimbledon Common

Together with Putney Heath, Wimbledon Common dominates the landscape of this part of London, and has had a major influence on urban development. In 1864, the lord of the manor, Earl Spencer, proposed enclosing 700 acres of the Common to form a park for a new mansion near the windmill and selling the remaining 300 acres for building. He was thwarted by the Select Committee inquiry of 1865 that led the way to the Metropolitan Commons Act 1866. Several years of campaigning by local residents and the Commons Preservation Society led to an act of parliament in 1871, which secured the future of the Common by entrusting it to the hands of a Board of Conservators, with annual compensation paid to Earl Spencer.

Comparison of the 1874 and 1948 OS maps indicates that the Conservators have been largely successful in preserving the Common's boundaries. Woodland had developed extensively on the west and north sides, while Shadwell Wood to the south had been reduced considerably and the land occupied by one of two golf courses, built in 1908. This golf course also runs over Caesar's Camp: bunkers and greens have been built among the earthworks.

'One prays earnestly that the Common be not vulgarised… by making this lovely spot ordinary – a kind of level, well-ordered suburban park, for this windswept Common is not ordinary; it stands alone and is therefore priceless'.31 Walter Johnson's prayer of 1912 has largely been answered by the work of the Conservators, although the Common is far less windswept than it was then. Since 1948, the most notable change has been the extent of further woodland growth on formerly open ground, in particular on the eastern side of the Common, on the north side of Windmill Lane and north of Bluegate Pond and around Hookhamslade Pond. Meanwhile, the golf course has developed a typical pattern of linear planting between fairways. The southern area, around Rushmere Pond, remains as open space, with municipal furniture; the pond and the setting have changed little in appearance since the 19th century.

In 1998, the London Ecology Unit's *Handbook No.29, Nature Conservation in Merton* deplored the lapse of traditional management after the 1871 Act and the subsequent woodland recolonisation, as well as the planting of ornamental trees, all resulting in the loss of the traditional heathland habitat. Awareness of this has clearly grown in the last seven years. The London Biodiversity Partnership's *Habitat Action Plan for Heathland* identifies the largest single area of heathland habitat as being in Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath, with 12ha located in Merton and 28ha in Wandsworth, out of a total for Greater London of some 80ha.

Image 102 A view of a group of women watching swans on Queens Mere, Wimbledon Common, 1900-1907. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage/NMR.

Image 103: Built in 1817 as a post mill, the windmill on Wimbledon Common was converted to a smock mill in 1893. It has been restored twice, once in 1957 and again in 1976. It now houses a museum. Baden-Powell was staying in one of the cottages pictured in 1907 when he started writing "Scouting for Boys". Campbells Press Studio Collection. Copyright: English Heritage/NMR.

Image 104 The open ground at Rushmere Pond, Wimbledon Common, is an intensively used area of open space and remains as picturesque as it was in the 19th century Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 105 Woodland growth on Wimbledon Common has changed the character of the Common even since the 1940s. This corner of West Place and West View was then entirely open. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

CASE STUDIES

In addition to the sample survey sites, five sites were examined in more depth through interviews with managers in order to identify issues. The interviews were based on a questionnaire, and the results standardised for ease of comparison. Also included with each site is the LPGT Inventory record (www.londongardensonline.org.uk) which provides site details and descriptions.

Harefield Village Green

Previous/other name(s)	Harefield Common	Dates	1813 (enclosure)
Contact	Parks and Open Spaces London Borough of Hillingdon	National Heritage List for England	Listed buildings – King's Arms and stable building, Ashley and South Cottages
Site address	Breakspear Road/ Rickmansworth Road/ Northwood Road, Harefield UB9	Local authority heritage designations	Ashley and South Cottages
London Borough/ ward	Hillingdon/ Harefield	LPGT inventory reference	HIL022
Grid ref	TQ0590	Date of research	2001 SW visit/ photos 1/8/01 and London Gardens Online
A-Z Master Map ref	p35 25L	Commons Registration Act 1965	Yes: Green (TVG35)
Strategic/secondary roads	Breakspear Road/ Rickmansworth Road/ Northwood Road	Metropolitan Open Land	No
Type of Site	Public Open Land C: Green	Green Belt	No
Size (hectares)	1.87	Tree Preservation Orders	No
Site owner	London Borough of Hillingdon	Nature Conservation Area	Yes – Borough importance II (pond)
Site management	Parks and Open Spaces, Tidy Harefield Group, Harefield Conservation Panel and other local groups	Special policy area	No
Site management issues		Other local authority designations	Registered common

Web site	www.hillingdon.gov.uk	Condition	Green Flag Award 2005 and subsequent years
Open to the public	Yes	Sources of information	Cherry, B and Pevsner, N 1999 *The Buildings of England, London 3: North West* Penguin; Weinreb, B Hibbert, C 1993 (revised edn) *The London Encyclopaedia* Macmillan; on-site plaque; LB Hillingdon *Harefield Village Green Management Plan 2005-2009*
Opening times	Unrestricted	Illustrations	
Facilities/events	Playground; annual fair and other events; annual Remembrance Day service		
Public transport	Tube: Uxbridge (Metropolitan/ Piccadilly); Ricksmansworth (Metropolitan) then bus. Bus: U9, R21		

LPGT's brief description:

Harefield existed as an early settlement and its village green is one of 11 registered commons and former village greens in Hillingdon. The land was part of the Manor of Harefield, which remained in the ownership of the Newdigate family from C16th-C20th. Following the Enclosures Act of 1813, the four-acre site was provided for the recreation of the inhabitants of the village. Harefield Village Green is largely open grass with perimeter trees and a pond on the south-east corner, near which is the War Memorial. In the north corner is the Harefield 2000 Memorial showing a hare within a globe that depicts the British Isles and Australia, with which Harefield has strong links.

LPGT's fuller description:

Harefield existed as an early settlement and its village green is one of 11 registered commons and former village greens in Hillingdon. The name derived from 'Herefelle' in Anglo Saxon probably meaning open land or field used by an army. The land was part of the Manor of Harefield which remained in the ownership of the Newdigate family from

the C16th to the C20th and despite development from the end of the C18th the area remains relatively rural. Prior to the Enclosures Act of 1813, the commonland reached the village. John Trumper, land surveyor and Enclosure Commissioner, was appointed to deal with the enclosure of the common land, heath and moors in the Parish of Harefield. James Trumper, probably his son and also a surveyor, was employed to make a plan for the parish. Although the Act made no provision for grazing of cattle by former commoners, Mr Trumper allocated this four-acre site as a place of recreation for the inhabitants, which is sometimes referred to as Harefield Common. It has been used for numerous events since then and has a children's playground.

Harefield Village Green today is largely open grass with perimeter trees and some new tree planting along the eastern edge, with a pond on the south-east corner. In the early C20th trees were planted along the Rickmansworth Road boundary. In the 1990s bollards were erected around the green to prevent access for cars and travellers. By 1951 a diagonal path that formerly crossed the green had disappeared. Near the pond is the War Memorial obelisk and the King's Arms dating from C17th and extended in the C18th. In the north corner is the Harefield 2000 Memorial showing a hare within a globe with the UK and Australia featured, designed by sculptor Lucy Kinsella, and unveiled by Professor Sir Magdi Yacoub of Harefield Hospital nearby. Its plaque gives history of the village, the use of the hare a pun on the name of the parish 'in the best heraldic tradition. The hare within the globe thus represents the village as the focus of the lives of those that live in it with the world-famous Harefield Hospital at its 'heart'.' The strong connection between Harefield and Australia is also represented, arising from the establishment of the Australian military hospital at Harefield Park for soldiers wounded in WWI and the ANZAC cemetery in St Mary's Churchyard (q.v.).

A comprehensive tree survey was undertaken in 2006 and the following species were listed: oak and English oak, horse chestnut, common ash, Scots pine, sycamore, common and small-leaved lime, Norway and field maple, Italian alder, weeping, scarlet and osier willow, dawn redwood and sweet gum. The pond had for many years tended to dry up in the summer but now has a permanent water supply supplied by Three Valleys Water, who part-funded the work.

Site maintenance and management:

A Management Plan has recently been prepared and adopted as part of preparing the site for entry into the Green Flag Awards. Harefield Green was awarded a Green Flag this year at its first attempt.

A Green Space Strategy was prepared in 2002 by the Parks and Open Spaces Department, pre-PPG17. Currently, an Open Spaces Strategy, post-PPG17, including needs assessment, etc., is being prepared by the Planning Department.

Special characteristics:

The site is managed as a public park; since being enclosed with bollards, it has had no distinguishing characteristics, except for its village-centre location and traditional events.

Observable change from documentary sources:

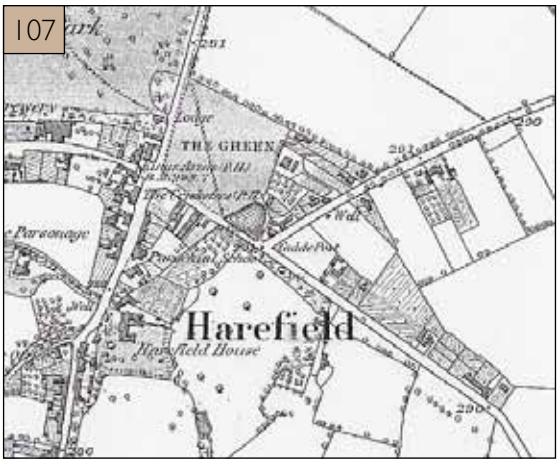
- There is early 20th century formal tree planting along Rickmansworth Road.
- Disappearance of the diagonal path since 1951.
- Impact of the adjacent road on the pond.

Notable recent changes:

- Housing was built in the 1990s, in the garden of the listed building overlooking the east side of the green.
- A millennium memorial was erected in 2000.
- The existing playground was updated around 2002.
- In the 1990s, bollards were erected around the green to prevent access for cars and travellers.
- The pond dried out, post-2000, ascribed to weather conditions.

Issues:

- Security and personal safety: There is little perception of risk from any user-groups.
- Anti-social behaviour: The site is adjacent to local shops and a cross-roads. Its seats attract small numbers of drinkers and groups of youths at night but they are not seen as a particular problem. Since the erection of bollards, joy-riding and car-access, as well as travellers' access, has been successfully prevented.
- Formalised recreation: The playground is popular but there is no demand for any extension to it or for provision for other types of formal recreation. The Green hosts a fun-fair and annual village and local school fetes.
- Ecological enhancement: The Green is mown grass and there is no demand at present for relaxation of the mowing regime. The pond is the only notable habitat area, and its ecological potential is limited by the drying up of the run-off which supplied its water. Bull-rushes and reeds are managed to maintain open areas.



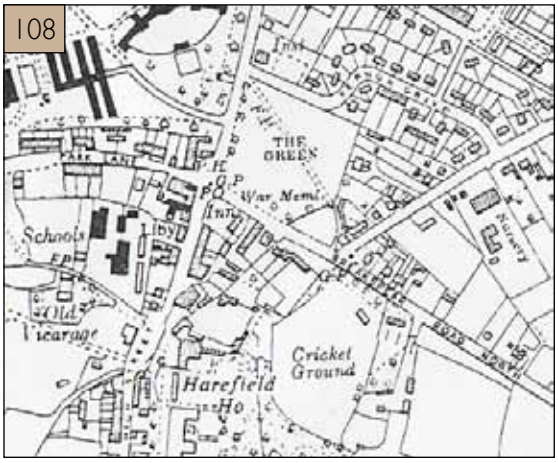


Image 106: Harefield Green, early 20th-century view of pond. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 107: Harefield Green, same view today, showing modern boundary, pavement, dry pond and tree growth. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 108: Map showing Harefield Green, 1868. Copyright: reproduced from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map.

Image 109: Map showing residential development and formal tree-planting along Harefield Green. Copyright: reproduced from the 1951 Ordnance Survey Map.

Image 110: Harefield Green playground, recently improved. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 111: Western boundary of Harefield Green with Rickmans-worth Road, showing new bollards and formal tree-planting. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Hounslow Heath

Previous/other name(s)	Hounslow Heath Nature Reserve; Hounslow Heath Golf Course	Dates	
Contact	Hounslow Heath Nature Reserve	National Heritage List for England	
Site address	450 Staines Road, Hounslow TW4 5AB	Local authority heritage designations	Local List category 1
London Borough/ward	Hounslow/Hounslow West	LPGT inventory reference	HOU031
Grid ref	TQ1274/1174/1173/1273	Research	1995 HC; 2001 SW visit/photos 22/8/01
A-Z Master Map ref	p99 57-59Y-Ba	Commons Registration Act 1965	
Strategic/ secondary roads	Staines Road; London distributor	Metropolitan Open Land	No
Type of Site	Public Open Land B: Heath	Green Belt	Yes
Size (hectares)	79.72	Tree Preservation Orders	No
Site owner	LB Hounslow	Nature Conservation Area	Yes: Metropolitan importance
Site management	LB Hounslow's contractor	Special policy area	No
Site management issues		Other local authority designations	Borough Park; Local Nature Reserve
Web site	www.hounslow.gov.uk	Condition	Generally well-maintained as a nature reserve

Open to the public	Yes	Sources of information	Saunders, A 1984 *The Art and Architecture of London* Oxford; Weinreb, B and Hibbert C (revised edn) 1993*The London Encyclopaedia* Macmillan; Radcliffe, C c1950 *Middlesex*, Evan Brothers Ltd; *A Brief History of Hounslow Heath*; Pape, D 1990 *Nature Conservation in Hounslow. Ecology Handbook 15* London Ecology Unit; The Parks Agency 2005 *Commons, Heaths and Greens in Greater London. A short report for English Heritage, 2005*
Opening times	Unrestricted; car park open 07:30 to dusk	Illustrations	Hounslow Heath barracks watercolour 1803 King's Topographical Collection
Facilities/events	Information centre; toilets; play area. Guided walks, events; nature trail.		
Public transport	Rail: Feltham then bus Bus: 116,117,235,237, H23		

LPGT's brief description:

Hounslow Heath, one of London's largest statutory nature reserves, is the last remnant of the vast heath that once covered this area. It was created in the C13th when a stretch of royal forest between Hounslow and Staines was cut down. Although Henry VIII still hunted here in the C16th over 1700 ha was commonland. The Heath became a place of military musters and a haunt of footpads, which brought it an evil reputation. It was not enclosed until between 1789 – 1819 in a series of Acts when land was parcelled out. Part of the area in the north was acquired by the government for military training in 1800. In the 1920s the first commercial air service was established on the east side and there were allotments and market gardens on the west. In 1977 a golf course was established on the west, the remainder maintained for nature conservation and recreation.

LPGT's fuller description:

Hounslow Heath is one of London's largest statutory nature reserves so designated in 1991, and is the last remnant of the vast heath that covered this area of London. The name Hounslow was earlier Honeslaw or Hundeslawe, lawe meaning 'rising ground', hundes possibly coming from 'hounds'. The A30 was a Roman road from London to

Silchester but there was no Roman settlement here. A tournament was recorded here shortly after King John was forced by the Barons to accept the Great Charter in 1215, and two years later the Dauphin of France presided over the conference here between Henry III and the Barons that led to the Treaty of Lambeth. The Heath was created in the C13th when a stretch of royal forest between Hounslow and Staines was cut down. Although Henry VIII still hunted here in the 16th century over 1700 ha was commonland and people were allowed to rear geese, ducks, cattle and sheep, and gorse and peat could be gathered. A map of 1635 by Moses Glover shows the heath as a barren plain from the village of Hounslow south to the River Crane at Isleworth. Traditionally the Heath became a place of military musters and a haunt of footpads which brought it an evil reputation. It was a favoured camping ground of the Parliamentarian Army and James II later established a large camp here where in 1686 he reviewed 15,000 men. However, the king's repeated visits to the camp on Hounslow Heath and the 'attendant gaieties' caused it to be looked upon as a pleasure resort, but following the waning of his popularity the camp became a menace rather than a security. Hounslow became the first coaching stage on the London to Bath road. Rows of gibbets lined the route across the heath in the C18th. In the late C18th the botanist Sir Joseph Banks was once arrested while collecting specimens on the heath, suspected of being a highwayman.

The area around the Heath was increasingly used for pasture and arable land although marshland and osier scrub along the Thames remained. It was here in 1784 that General William Roy set up the base line for the first triangle with which the Ordnance Survey of England began. The Heath was not enclosed until between 1789 and 1819 in a series of Acts when land was parcelled out. William Cobbett commented in the early C19th: 'the land between Egham and Hammersmith is as flat as a pancake and the soil a nasty, stony dirt upon a bed of gravel. Hounslow Heath which is only a little worse than the general run is a sample of all that is bad in soil and villainous in look'. Part of the area in the north was acquired by the government for military training in 1800 and as late as 1948 a large area remained a military exercise and review ground. In 1919 the first flight from England to Australia took off from here and the first commercial air service between England and Paris was from here before the airport opened in Croydon in 1920. Allotments and market gardens existed on the east side of the heath in the 1920s.

From the 1850s gravel had been extracted from the heath, which continued up until 1957 and pits were initially filled in with rubbish and levelled by the mid 1960s. The northern border of the heath today is bracken and scrub, with oak woodland on the south east, mixed woodland and scrub to the north west. In 1977 LB Hounslow created a golf course on c.25ha on the west of the Heath, the remainder maintained for nature conservation and

Site maintenance and management:

The site maintenance is mainly by CIP, which runs Hounslow's environmental services, and employs the rangers. Volunteers also contribute with weekly working parties. Grazier and hay-cut are external contracts. Day-to-day management is by Hounslow. There is an advisory committee but this is not directly involved in management, rather for consultation and public information. Hounslow Heath Local Nature Reserve was

established in 1991. There are four full-time staff, although responsibilities extend to other sites.

There is no significant issue about coordination with other council departments, although there is occasional debate over areas of responsibility. For example, between rangers and street-cleaning teams over dumping and fly-tipping.

The site does not cross any administrative boundaries but it abuts the LB of Richmond, and an increasing number of users come from that borough.

The Management Plan is currently undergoing its five-year review. The review is likely to highlight the need to extend it beyond habitat management to history, interpretation and recreation. The Plan affords a clear vision for the site in terms of habitat, for example, restoring heathland. In addition, Hounslow is in the second year of a Countryside Stewardship agreement which sets out clear targets for heathland restoration. Community development is at present probably less clearly envisaged.

The 2004 draft Green Space Strategy makes clear that the site is valued for its 'unique heathland habitat and access to natural landscape.' The Heath is well-established in planning and greenspace management terms, with demands for formal recreation facilities steered towards more formal parks and green space.

There is an advisory committee and the Management Plan review has flagged up the aim of setting up a Friends group.

Special characteristics:

The Heath's special characteristics in terms of habitat and physical appearance are well understood, as are the objectives of the Management Plan. Its heathland is being conserved by clearance of scrub on neutral grassland and restoration of the Heath on acid areas, including removal of topsoil and seeding with heather.

Observable change from documentary sources:

- There have been significant encroachments for development since 1869.
- Gravel was worked on the Heath from the 1850s to the late 1950s. Early pits were backfilled with domestic and inactive waste, but capped with local soils. Later pits were capped with a variety of different topsoils, creating different conditions on the earlier western areas from the later eastern.
- The tipping has resulted in notable changes in level as well as soil type.
- In the 1920s, the first commercial air service was established on the western area. Allotments and market gardens existed on the east side.
- As late as 1948, a large part of the site was a military exercise and review ground, with only a fringe to the south and south-west not so used.
- 1960s tower-blocks on Hanworth Road dominate the southern skyline.

Notable recent changes:

- As recently as the 1970s the Heath was much more open: oak and hawthorn scrub have developed on the neutral grassland areas.
- Residential development off Frampton Road will impinge visually, and place further pressure for access on this side.
- The 1977 golf course cuts the Heath off from the valley of the River Crane.
- A car park and ranger centre were developed in the northern corner.
- There have been heathland habitat restoration works.
- A wildflower meadow was created.
- New hedges.
- Grazing reintroduced.
- Wetland constructed; viewing hide is vandalised and work suspended.
- Royal Mail development of former marshalling yards immediately adjoining the railway on the southern boundary.

Issues:

- Security and personal safety: Largely confined to the margins; the site is gated at night. The Heath attracts campers from the local immigration centre.
- Vandalism: This is a constant battle of attrition: the ranger centre is alarmed, fenced and gated. Serious damage has been done by fires started on the Heath, the most serious as recently as 2003. The bird hide building was seriously damaged during construction and work has been suspended. New works, such as board-walks, prove especially vulnerable to damage. Notice-boards are regularly vandalised.
- Anti-social behaviour: There is some problem with drinking and drugs.
- Formalised recreation: There is low but established demand from young people for formal recreational provision.
- Conflicts between access and ecological enhancement: There is widespread understanding and acceptance of works and restrictions for habitat enhancement.
- Priorities: Land management and dealing with anti-social behaviour takes up an increasing percentage of staff-time, leaving less for ecological monitoring.

- User numbers: With multiple entrances, the Heath is difficult to survey for user numbers and profile, patterns of use etc. There are selective biannual surveys at key points, but the managers are conscious that this needs to be addressed. Groundwork Thames Valley is currently developing a project with CIP, to investigate how local people access the site, how it could be improved and how other uses could be developed.

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Image 112 Hounslow Heath in 1869, with extensive heathland west, south and south-east. Copyright: reproduced from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map.

Image 113 A Car park, built since 1991 for Hounslow Heath, with appropriate, low-spec surfacing and edging, and suitable planting. Copyright: The Parks Agency.
Image 114 RAF aerial photograph, 1948, showing Hounslow Heath criss-crossed with access roads and tracks. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 115 General view looking south over Hounslow Heath. Scrub clearance has restored the original open aspect. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image116 Oak and Hawthorn scrub on areas of neutral grassland, Hounslow Heath. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 117 Wildflower meadow created on area of old market gardens in eastern part of Hounslow Heath. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Plumstead Common (including Winns Common and The Slade)

Previous/other name(s)		Dates	
Contact	Parks and Open Spaces, LB Greenwich	National Heritage List for England	Scheduled Monument Bronze Age Barrow on Winns Common
Site address	Plumstead Common Road/ King's Highway./ The Slade, Plumstead SE18	Local authority heritage designations	Pair of disused steps from The Slade
London Borough/ ward	LB Greenwich	LPGT inventory reference	GRN041
Grid ref	TQ450778	Research	1995 DL, 2002 SW visit/photos 11/1/02; 27/7//2005
A-Z Master Map ref	p108 515c-Wc	Commons Registration Act 1965	Yes: Common CL25
Strategic/ secondary roads	District roads: King's Highway/The Slade/ Plumstead Common Road	Metropolitan Open Land	No
Type of Site	Public Park; Public Open Land A: Common	Green Belt	No
Size (hectares)	40.83	Tree Preservation Orders	No
Site owner	LB Greenwich	Nature Conservation Area	Yes – Borough Importance (not Winn's Common)
Site management	Parks and Open Spaces LB Greenwich and Plumstead Common Environmental Group	Special policy area	Green Chain/ Green Chain Walk
Site management issues	See below	Other local authority designations	Green Chain/Green Chain Walk
Web site		Condition	Well-kept

Open to the public	Yes	Sources of information	Jordan, H 1992 *Public Parks 1885-1914*', AA dissertation p138; *South East London's Green Chain Walk* pack, 1998: Cherry, B and Pevsner, N 1999 *The Buildings of England: London 2: South* Penguin; Swales S, Game M, Yarham I 1989 *Nature Conservation in Greenwich. Ecology Handbook 10* London Ecology Unit; Weinreb, B and Hibbert, C (revised edn) 1993 *The London Encyclopaedia* Macmillan; Plumstead Common Environment Group 2004 *Our Common Story, A Celebration of Plumstead Common;* The Parks Agency 2005 *Commons, Heaths and Greens in Greater London. A short report for English Heritage*
Opening times	Unrestricted	Illustrations	Numerous in *Our Common Story, A Celebration of Plumstead Common*', (see above); postcards of various views (1900-20) in Nigel Temple Postcard Collection of Parks and Gardens, PC09870, 6721, 9868, 9869, 9871. Also postcard of St Margaret's Church, Vicarage Road c1900-06, PC09071
Facilities/events	Bowling green, tennis courts, rugby/football pitches, children's playground, paddling pool, trim trail, numerous events, local authority information board.		
Public transport	Rail: Plumstead/Woolwich Arsenal then bus. Bus: 51,53.		

LPGT's brief description:

The name Plumstead arises from the many orchards once in the area; the land was good for growing fruit as well as grazing and as a consequence the village prospered. The eastern part of Plumstead Common is locally called Winns Common, an area purportedly settled by ancient Britons. Development accelerated here in the C19th and encroachments of the common land took place to the increasing concern of local people. In 1874 the lord of the manor gave permission to the military to use the Common and then proposed leasing it on a permanent basis. This was actively opposed and in 1877 Plumstead and Winns Commons were purchased by the MBW to preserve them for public open space. Plumstead Common was landscaped from 1903 and today is a large expanse of heathland and flat grassland, in addition to more formally laid out areas. Some earlier features, such as the Edwardian bandstand, no longer exist.

LPGT's fuller description:

The name Plumstead arises from the many orchards once in the area; the land was good for growing fruit as well as grazing and as a consequence the village prospered. The eastern part of Plumstead Common between King's Highway and Lakedale Road is locally called Winns Common, an area purportedly settled by ancient Britons. Several barrows and mounds were found in the area, as well as Roman relics, and one mound remains on Winns Common. The land around Plumstead had belonged to the Monks of Lesnes Abbey until Henry VIII requisitioned it and from 1539 the Manor had numerous owners until 1736 when it was bequeathed to Queen's College, Oxford, but by the C19th it was badly managed. Development accelerated in the C19th with the population of Plumstead rising from 1,166 in 1801 to 24,502 in 1861. Encroachments of the common land took place to the increasing concern of the local people. In 1874 the military were granted permission to use Plumstead Common for a riding school and drill ground for soldiers at Woolwich and the College then proposed leasing it to them on a permanent basis. Winns Common was used as practice ground for horses and gun carriages. On 1 July 1876 a demonstration led by John de Morgan of the Commons Protection League was staged with a procession from Woolwich Arsenal to the common to remove fencing that had been erected; this was replaced overnight and rioting then ensued the following day and de Morgan was arrested, imprisoned for a month and fined £50 for inciting the riot. The rights of grazing, digging sand and gravel, cutting turf and fern, and 'lawful' recreation were argued, as a consequence of which in 1877 the Metropolitan Board of Works purchased Plumstead and Winns Commons for £9,000 from Queen's College in order to preserve them for public open space, the land acquired under the Plumstead Commons Act 1878. In 1900 responsibility passed to the Metropolitan Board of Woolwich, in 1965 passing to LB Greenwich.

Plumstead Common was landscaped from 1903; built features included a bandstand, since demolished, shelter, and toilets. The bandstand was much-used but eventually demolished after vandalism and an adventure playground was built around it. Near the adventure playground a war memorial was erected in the 1920s to commemorate the dead of the 8th Howitzer Brigade in WWI and since then remembrance services have been held. In the 1920s and 1930s there were two bowling greens, now reduced to one green that is fenced and the site of the second used for football. A large pond or lake

shown on early maps became an open-air bathing pool and boating lake from the early 20th Century but after WWII bomb damage was converted to a paddling pool in the 1960s with swings and a play area. Winn's Common was the site of 100 pre-fabs after WWII to house residents who had lost their houses, but it was returned to common land c.1957. The site is crossed by various roads and is a large expanse of heathland and flat grassland with mature trees including sycamore, lime, London plane, and tree-lined avenues and roads.

The Slade, a small dell with steeply sloping sides and a pond at the bottom situated at the northern end of Plumstead Common, was acquired by the council in c.1961. The ponds were once part of a watercourse fed by springs in Shrewsbury Park (q.v.), probably culverted during building development in the 1880s when pipes were laid. In 1994 it won a Shell 'Best of Better Britain' Award.

The 1.25 ha wooded area at the edge of the Common behind Blendon Terrace and Azile Everett House was originally part of the vicarage garden of St Mary's and is now a Nature Reserve, which has secondary woodland with sycamore, ash, a number of mature false acacia, London planes, sessile and English oaks, holly and an old black mulberry tree. Great Bartletts is a piece of woodland of 3.27 ha running down from Winns Common, crossed by the Green Chain walk, onto which gardens of Wickham Lane back.

The Commons divide into a series of spaces of somewhat different character. To the east Winns Common is a high plateau with good views of Bostall Woods and has a sunken hedged playground with paddling pool and small pavilion on the north west side. Plumstead Common has The Slade dell, a well kept pond, then above is open grassland with playing fields, crossed by paths with perimeter trees. Near the school is a closed C20th pavilion, then a series of gardens with bowling green to the south and tennis courts north of a hedged path. The land then slopes down to the more wooded area with paths through the grassland, and an adventure playground.

The Plumstead Common Environmental Group was set up in 1991 and campaigns for improvements, some of which is undertaken with the Council such as cleaning of The Slade pond in the 1990s, and clearance of dumping ground near Blendon Terrace that is now a nature reserve. Today the site is largely managed as a public park with grass generally mown although The Slade and fringes of Winns Common are left wilder, with longer grassland and woodland retaining the atmosphere of the old common's special character.

Site maintenance and management:

The site is managed entirely In-house by the LB Greenwich Parks and Open Spaces department with the Plumstead Common Environment Group (PCEG) undertaking some work such as cleaning.

There is no management plan as yet but the LB of Greenwich is currently working on this for all its parks and open spaces plus a Green Space Strategy. Much of the area is

designated as a site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation and as an Area of Special Character of Metropolitan Importance.

The Friends group, PCEG is very active. PCEG was set up in 1991 and campaigns for improvements and undertakes projects such as the Slade pond in the 1990s, clearing the dumping ground by Blendon Terrace which is now a nature reserve, and monitoring and lobbying on issues such as litter, dumping, vandalism, parking, etc.

Special characteristics:

- The site is largely managed as a public park with grass generally gang mown, although The Slade and fringes of Winns Common are left wilder with longer grassland and woodland, and retain the atmosphere of the Common, still noted for its fine views particularly to the north from Winns Common.

- A special feature is the barrow on Winns Common – although its historic significance is unmarked at the site.

- The Common is still surrounded largely by Victorian buildings and in some places early 20th-century view are remarkably similar to those of today.

- Publication by PCEG of *Our Common Story: A celebration of Plumstead Common* in 2004, following an exhibition in 2000, provides an excellent and accessible historical record of the special character of the Common.

Observable change from documentary sources:

- Site of a large pond or lake shown on early maps became an open-air bathing pool and boating lake from the early 20th century. After WWII bomb damage this was converted in the 1960s into a paddling pool with swings and a play area.

- Recreational facilities: in the 1920s and 1930s there were two bowling greens. Now there is only one, the site of the other is being used for football (vandalism had been a problem, the remaining green is fenced). The London Marathon Trust recently funded new tennis courts for school and public use. An adventure playground was created in the 1970s.

- Winns Common had been the site of 100 prefabs for WWII bombed-out residents, but returned to common land around 1957.

- A war memorial near the adventure playground was erected in the 1920s to commemorate WWI dead of the 8th London Howitzer Brigade; remembrance services are held here since the 1920s.

- Designation of the Common and its surrounding Victorian housing as a Conservation Area in the 1970s was due largely to the efforts of the Plumstead Society (formed 1973).

- Some land has accrued to the Common over the years –for example, what was a scrapyard until the 1960s by Bleak Hill.

- A Nature Reserve (designated 1992) was created on former dumping ground after St Margaret's Church was demolished post-war.

- The much-used Edwardian bandstand (shown in numerous early postcards) had an adventure playground built around it, was vandalised, and then had to be demolished.

- Notable recent changes Improvement in the 1990s to The Slade ponds at the bottom of a natural ravine. Once part of a watercourse fed by springs in Shrewsbury Park, probably culverted during Victorian building of the 1880s when pipes were laid, later polluted by sewage. In 1994, it won the Shell 'Best of Better Britain' Award.

Issues:

- Anti-social behaviour: The site is adjacent to local shops, schools, housing and busy roads. Litter is seen as a particular problem by the PCEG who are vigilant, and feel that the Council should enforce recent litter laws (PGEG sees education as a more productive solution than provision of bins). Litter, dumping and fly-tipping are a borough-wide problem, as are fires, also evident on the Common. Vandals have particularly damaged the paddling pool area, the screening of which by hedges makes detection difficult. Changing rooms and toilets are continually being damaged.

- Security: The LB of Greenwich has a team of three park keepers who provide a presence, pick up litter, etc, often working later in evenings but tending to go to trouble spots. Park keepers work out of a yard by St John's Terrace.•

- Car parking: Some verges of the Common are used for parking, but the problem is a lack of car-parking facilities for local residents.

- Formalised recreation: Various areas of the common are used for football and rugby. The 20th-century brick pavilion is now leased to the local rugby club. The Common, mainly the middle section, is extensively used for events such as an Anti-Racist Festival, Asian Mela (in some residents' views it is used too extensively, particularly for large-scale events).

- Ecological enhancement: Aside from the areas already noted as of ecological interest and enhancement, there are plans (spearheaded by the PCEG) for an additional area of Council-owned land, formerly part of St Nicholas Hospice, to be reclaimed as a new nature reserve with accent on access – boardwalks for wheelchair users, signage in Braille and various languages.

- Interpretative Material: The LB of Greenwich has a rolling programme to install robust cast-iron, embossed and painted local history signs in its parks (see also those in Bostall Heath and Woods) and three are to go up on Plumstead Common.

- Future Development: There is some anxiety that current regeneration of Woolwich Town Centre could spill over to Plumstead Common area and alter the largely 19th-century appearance of its environment, although the Common itself is protected from land erosion.

Image 118 People gathered around the lake on Plumstead Common, 1900-1920. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage/NMR.

Image 119 General view of Plumstead Common, 1900-1920. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage/NMR.

Image 120 A view of houses and track of Acacia Parade, 1906-1911. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage/NMR.

Image 121 A similar view of the houses on Acacia Parade, Plumstead Common today, little changed. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 122 Winns Common, Plumstead, view to the north. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 123 Winns Common, Plumstead, paddling pool on the site of the old lake. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Wandsworth Common

Previous/other name(s)	Battersea West Heath; Wandsworth East Heath	Dates	1871; 1887; 1912-20s
Contact	Chief Parks Officer, Staff Yard, Battersea Park, London SW11 4NJ 020 8871 7530 Assistant Ecology Officer, Staff Yard, Wandsworth Common Depot, Dorlcote Road, London SW18 3RT 020 8871 7019	National Heritage List for England	LBII* St Mark's Church, LBII Windmill (Windmill Road)
Site address	Wandsworth Common Westside/Northside/ Bolingbroke Grove/ Nightingale Lane//Trinity Road SW11/SW12/SW18	Local authority heritage designations	Local list category I Wandsworth Common Conservation Area
London Borough/ward	Wandsworth	LPGT inventory reference	WND067
Grid ref	TQ271751	Date of research	1995 HC; 2002 SW visit/ photos 22/4/02
A-Z Master Map ref	p103 57-60GbHb	Commons Registration Act 1965	Yes- Common CL32
Strategic/ secondary roads		Metropolitan Open Land	Yes
Type of Site	Public Open Land A: Common	Green Belt	No
Size (hectares)	71.7 (69.43 registered common)	Tree Preservation Orders	Yes (borders)
Site owner	LB Wandsworth (part registered under Land Registration Acts)	Nature Conservation Area	Yes – Borough Importance I
Site management	LB Wandsowrth Parks Service; Management Advisory Committee	Special policy area	No
Site management issues		Other local authority designations	Common
Web site	www.wandsworth.gov.uk	Condition	Good generally

Open to the public	Yes	Sources of information	Cherry, B and Pevsner, N 1999 *Buildings of England: London 2: South*; LCC 1924 *London Parks and Open Spaces*; LB Wandsworth *Wandsworth Common Conservation Area Character Statements*; LB Wandsworth 1990s *Wandsworth Common Nature Trail* leaflet; The Parks Agency 2005 *Commons, Heaths and Greens in Greater London. A short report for English Heritage*
Opening times	Unrestricted Nature Study Centre open Wed 2:00-4:00pm, first Sunday of the month 2:30-4:30pm	Illustrations	OS 1874 and 1948;2 postcards c1920
Facilities/events	Café, sports pitches, tennis courts, bowling, lake (fishing in season for members), trim trail, children's playground, One O'Clock Club, Nature Study Centre		
Public transport	Rail: Wandsworth Common; Bus: 77, 219, 349, G1		

LPGT's brief description:

Wandsworth Common is an important historic common, the remains of more extensive commonland that was part of the wastes of the Manors of Battersea and Wandsworth; by the C19th it had been sub-divided by the railway and encroached upon by building as London was developed. Attempts by local people to preserve the Common against further encroachment began in earnest in 1868 when appeals were made to the MBW to take over responsibility following the Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866, but this was initially unsuccessful. In 1870 a Common Defence Committee was set up, later to become the Wandsworth Common Preservation Society. In 1887 the Common was transferred to the MBW who carried out improvements including planting, paths layout, creation of the ornamental lakes from old gravel pits as well as the smaller Three Island Pond near Bolingbroke Grove. In 1898 the Common became the responsibility of the new LCC who in 1912 purchased an area of 20 acres of open land to extend the common.

LPGT's fuller description:

Wandsworth Common is an important historic common, the remains of more extensive commonland that earlier went by a number of names including Battersea West Heath and Wandsworth East Heath. It was part of the wastes of the Manor of Battersea and Wandsworth; by the C19th it had been sub-divided by the railway and encroached upon by building as London was developed, with some 53 enclosures between 1794 and 1866. The larger areas enclosed were taken for building the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building (q.v.), the industrial school of St James, Allfarthing Piece, McKellar's Triangle, the Justices of Surrey. Attempts by local people to preserve the Common against further encroachment began in earnest in 1868 when appeals were made to the Metropolitan Board of Works to take over responsibility, following the Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866, but this was initially unsuccessful. In 1870 a Common Defence Committee was set up, later to become the Wandsworth Common Preservation Society. Action was taken in April to try and keep Plough Green open and in the months that followed, fund-raising efforts and lobbying of support accelerated. Eventually Earl Spencer, Lord of the Manor, agreed to transfer most of the common to the Defence Committee excluding the area which later became Spencer Park (q.v.). A Bill went through Parliament in July 1871, the Wandsworth Common Act, and part of the common was then transferred to a group of Conservators elected by inhabitants of Battersea and Wandsworth for a £250 annuity paid to Earl Spencer. This annuity and maintenance costs were raised by a special rate levied of the inhabitants.

In 1887 under the Metropolitan Board of Works Act 1887 it transferred to the MBW who carried out a number of improvements including planting, paths layout, creation of the ornamental lakes from old gravel pits as well as the smaller Three Island Pond near Bolingbroke Grove. A bandstand was erected c.1900 but has since been demolished. In 1898 the Common had become the responsibility of the new London County Council who in 1912 purchased an area of 20 acres of open land to extend the common. This had belonged to the Royal Patriotic Fund Company but prior to the 1850s had been part of the common. The cost of £12,000 included building a wall between the open space and the Royal Patriotic Fund Company's land. However, before this area could be provided for the public's use, it was taken over in WWI for the third London General Hospital by the Government. When it was reinstated after the war, facilities were provided including a bowling green and tennis courts. Since 1971 responsibility for the common transferred to LB Wandsworth and again improvements were carried out.

Around the common's boundaries are many early C19th and Edwardian housing as well as the White Cottage by Voysey (1905) and St Mark's Church at Battersea Rise. On Windmill Road is a weather-boarded wind pump built in 1837-40 to restore the water supply which had been disrupted by the nearly railway cutting, redundant by the 1870s and now without its sails. Today the common includes 25 acres known as 'The Scope', an area designed to create an ecologically rich environment. The Nature Study Centre is based here and provides support for ecological and educational work in the Borough.

Site maintenance and management:

Maintenance is part of a general green space contract. Some specialist work is contracted out (for example, lake works). Originally site management was carried out by a board of conservators set up under the Wandsworth Common Act 1871. It was transferred to the MBW in 1887, subsequently to the LCC, and then to the LB of Wandsworth. There is a Management Advisory Committee for the Common, but there is some concern that it is not entirely representative of the community as a whole. In 2005, a management plan was being prepared. Establishing a clear vision for the management of the Common as a whole and in different character areas will be challenging, given the range of different uses and habitats.

There is an adopted Green Space Strategy. The strategy is very broad but does state the intention of producing Management and Maintenance Plans (MMP) for all sites, including Wandsworth Common, over the next five years. The Strategy refers to the biodiversity importance of the Common and mentions its historic character but does not explain it.

Observable change from documentary sources:

- Fragmentation by transport routes and by residential development, for example, the north and east of Wandsworth Common station, pre-1948.
- Infilling and residential development of the Black Sea lake, pre-1948.
- Infilling of ponds south of Three Island Pond, 1874–1948.
- Construction of playing fields on former farmland west of Neal's Farm, post-war.
- Widening of Trinity Road, post-war.
- Dumping of spoil from road-widening, post-war.
- Increase in tree-cover, 1874–1948.
- Formal tree-planting, for example, of the Avenue, around 1900.
- Formalisation of the Three Island Pond, around 1900.
- Construction of the bowling green, cricket square and tennis court post-1948 after incorporation of Neal's Farm.
- Bandstand erected around 1900.

Notable recent changes

- Construction of the park depot buildings in the farm yard.
- Bandstand demolished.
- Introduction of staff car-parking by the depot.
- Increase in tree and scrub growth in the last 25 years, for example in The Scope.
- A play area was constructed near the lake.
- Improvements were made to the lakes and paths under the London Lakes Project.
- Residential conversion and new development of the former Royal Victoria Patriotic School and grounds.
- Landscaping of Three Island Pond.
- Conversion of some areas of amenity grassland to meadow.

Issues:

- Is it a common or a park? Biodiversity is a better established interest than amenity; a major public consultation exercise is planned this summer.
- There is a clear demand for 'park' amenities, but a very vociferous demand for a wilder landscape.
- There is also an unofficial lobby group (WAVE) which is pressing for the latter. The catchment is thought to contain a large proportion of young mothers who have not yet been canvassed.
- Personal safety: There are some problems with robberies on the edge of the Common. The LB of Wandsworth has a parks police service based at Battersea which patrols the Common, and problem areas are targeted (for example, near the station). In woodland areas, establishing sight-lines has been raised as a management issue. However, only 13 per cent of the local population rate safety in the Common as an issue, compared to a Greater London figure of 33 per cent. Crime tends to be on the margins of the site.
- Vandalism: The parks police and rangers have a continual problem with graffiti and damage to new trees, etc. Drinking is not seen as an issue. Noticeably, the unfenced bowling green, its wooden pavilion and its herbaceous border are immaculate.
- Formal recreation: There is a demand and there is a good level of provision already: two playgrounds, cricket, football, bowls, tennis, One o'Clock Club, etc.

- Management of woodland: There has been vociferous opposition to scrub clearance whether for security or for conservation purposes. Extension of areas of meadow grass has not proved a problem – margins are kept mown to prevent appearance of neglect.

- Cycling: Wandsworth has an active cyclists campaign group; path-sharing is a huge issue and the possibility of a dedicated cycle route is currently being explored.

Image 124 OS plan 1874, showing Wandsworth Common already fragmented by encroachments, enclosures and transport routes. Copyright: reproduced from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map.

Image 125: OS plan 1948 of Wandsworth Common showing tree-growth, planting and other amenity improvements by the MBW and the LCC. Copyright: reproduced from the 1948 Ordnance Survey Map.

Image 126: Wandsworth Common, view through formal tree planting toward the drinking fountain, 1920-1926. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage/ NMR.

Image 127 Wandsworth Common, amenity grass to the left, meadow grass with mown verges to the right. Note also new formal tree-planting along path. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 128 General view showing three island pond, Wandsworth Common, 1900-1920. Nigel Temple postcard collection. Copyright: English Heritage/ NMR.

Image 129 Three Island Pond, with new marginal planting to soften the concrete edge. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Woodford Green

Previous/other name(s)		Dates	C18th
Contact	Parks Development Team, LB Redbridge	National Heritage List for England	LBII*: No 1 Broomhill Walk (Hurst House/ 'The Naked Beauty') LBII: Obelisk; South Lodge of Harts Hospital; All Saints Church; No 8 Johnston Road.
Site address	High Road/Broomhill Road, Woodford Green, Essex IG8	Local authority heritage designations	Local list: Winston Churchill statue; various buildings overlooking the Green including 2-11 The Terrace, 1 Inmans Road, Johnston Road, Broomhill Road Also Heritage Land Woodford Green Conservation Area
London Borough/ ward	Redbridge/Monkham	LPGT inventory reference	RED047
Grid ref	TQ3991/4091	Date of research	1995 TLG; 1999/2000 SW visit/photos 16/12/1999; 11/2/2000; 22/7/05; 16/9/06
A-Z Master Map ref	p45 22/23Hc/Jc	Commons Registration Act 1965	
Strategic/ secondary roads		Metropolitan Open Land	No
Type of Site	Public Open Land C: Green	Green Belt	Yes
Size (hectares)	-	Tree Preservation Orders	No
Site owner	City of London	Nature Conservation Area	Yes – Borough Importance II Also SSSI (small part on west boundary)

Site management	Epping Forest Conservators and LB Redbridge Parks Development Team; Woodford Green Amenity Group; Woodford Green Cricket Club	Special policy area	Heritage Land; SSSI (small part on west boundary)
Site management issues		Other local authority designations	
Web site	www.redbridge.gov.uk	Condition	
Open to the public	Yes	Sources of information	LB Redbridge *Conservation Area Appraisal* (1970) and enhancement proposals (1984); Dowling, I and Harris N 2003, *Images of London: Wanstead and Woodford*, Tempus Publishing; Lawrence, P and Green, G 1996 *Woodford, A Pictorial History* Phillimore; Ramsey, Winston G (ed) 1986 *Epping Forest Then and Now. After the Battle*; Fowkes 1981 *Woodford – Then and Now'*; Lindfield, A and Naismith, B 1999 *Cricket on the Green* Woodford Green Cricket Club; Ben Weinreb, Ben and Hibbert, Christopher 1993 *The London Encyclopaedia'* Macmillan; Williams, Guy 1975 *London in the Country, The Growth of Suburbia* London: Hamish Hamilton; Walford, Edward 1883/4 (1985 edn) *Village London, the Story of Greater London, Part 2 – North and East'* The Alderman Press; The Parks Agency 2005 *Commons, Heaths and Greens in Greater London. A short report for English Heritage'*.

Opening times	Unrestricted	Illustrations	OS 1st edition 6 ins; OS c1948 1:10,000. Aerial photos 1967. Numerous old photographs in publications and Local Studies and Archives. Johnston's Pond c.1955 in I Dowling, I and Harris N (see above), Broadmead Road in 1930s in Lawrence, P and Green, G (see above); Line drawing of Hurst House in *Woodford A Pictorial History*.
Facilities/events	Cricket pitch (Woodford Green Cricket Club) Various events on the Green		
Public transport	Tube: Woodford; South Woodford (Central) then bus. Bus: 179, 201, 275, W13		

LPGT's brief description:

Woodford Green is in two distinct sections, with a third and smaller green on the west side of High Road at High Elms. The southern section has perimeter horse chestnuts on its west side, with a poplar alley running through it. Settled since Saxon times, in the C17th Woodford attracted the rich, professional classes as a pleasant place to live at a convenient distance from London. The village character persisted until the arrival of the railway in the 1850s encouraged new housing development, bringing an influx of people and a more suburban aspect. The main village pond remains and cricket has been played on the Green for centuries. A statue of Sir Winston Churchill, who was MP for Wanstead and Woodford from 1924-1964 was unveiled on 31 October 1959.

LPGT's fuller description:

Woodford Green is a long village green in two distinct main sections, divided by Broadmead and Snakes Lane West. A third and smaller green is on the west side of High Road at High Elms. The southern section has perimeter horse chestnuts planted c.1930-40 on its west side, with a poplar alley running through it planted in the late 1950s. An avenue of poplars was first planted c1887 for Queen Victoria's Jubilee on the eastern boundary of the green, later realigned on Winston Churchill's statue in the late 1960s; the avenue now alternates poplars with planes. A line of notable horse chestnuts can be seen in Broadmead, which formerly marked the northern boundary of the cricket pitch. This roadway in front of The Terrace was made into a short dual carriageway in 1964 and has a green central reservation on which the horse chestnuts are now stranded.

Settled since Saxon times, in the C17th Woodford attracted the rich, professional classes as a pleasant place to live at a convenient distance from London, who built large houses and estates here. Wells were found in Woodford in the C18th but, their healing properties presumably over-rated, the little spa vanished almost as soon as it was advertised. The village character of the place persisted until the arrival of the railway in the 1850s, which encouraged new housing development, bringing an influx of people and a more suburban aspect. However, Woodford Green maintains its village atmosphere to some extent, and some of the grand houses remain. In the northern section, the

gates to Hart House (q.v.) front the Green and Warner's Path, a footpath marking an ancient path, runs along this eastern edge and is named after its C18th occupant, Richard Warner. The area behind Hart House is now largely private housing, developed into a series of streets. Overlooking the south end of the Green is Hurst House, a Georgian house built in 1714 for Henry Raine, a wealthy East London brewer who founded Raine's Foundation Schools in the East End. His house became known as 'The Naked Beauty', perhaps because of its exposed position; damaged by fire in 1936, it was later carefully restored. In front of the house in an area of the Green known as The Sweep, is an obelisk surrounded by four spherical finials, which was renovated in 1977 by the Civic Trust and Woodford Green Amenity Group to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

Nearby is a bronze figure by David McFall, R.A, of Sir Winston Churchill, who was MP for Wanstead and Woodford from 1924 to 1964. The statue was unveiled on 31 October 1959 by Field Marshall Viscount Montgomery in the presence of Sir Winston and Lady Churchill. An oak tree was planted near the statue in 1995 for VE Day. Adjacent to Woodford Green and forming the roundabout for the busy junction of Woodford New Road and High Road is a tree-planted piece of land with a red granite drinking fountain under a rustic shelter erected by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association, now publicly inaccessible due to busy roads.

Cricket has been played on the Green for centuries and Woodford Green Cricket Club was established here c.1735; it is reputedly the second-oldest cricket ground in the country. The first cricket pavilion was built in 1959, permission having been granted to build on Epping Forest land, and has been extended since then. In the summer, the cricket green was fenced against grazing cattle. Grazing by cattle on the common land continued until the 1998 BSE crisis. There were a number of ponds in the past but one main village pond remains, although the pump that is shown in early C20th photographs is no longer present. It was variously named Johnston Pond, Potato Pond or Kendon's Pond after a local butcher's shop that faced it. The small detached area of green on the west side of High Elms, which has lost its connection with the main green as a result, also retains an old pond, Firs Pond.

Woodford Green Amenity Group provided a new hand-carved sign with village history on it in 2003.

Present Condition (see date of research): Northern end of the Green is open land, quite scrubby, with a church at the top. The southern portion of the Green beyond Snakes Lane West/Broadmead is more formal, with poplar avenue, lines of trees, and statuary. 2005: quite well kept; evidence of tree planting – planes between the poplars of the avenue.

Site maintenance and management:

Woodford Green is predominantly managed as part of Epping Forest by the Corporation of London Epping Forest Conservators. The LB of Redbridge has responsibility for two small detached areas in the south (one with an obelisk), Horse-chestnut trees on the High Road boundary, the area around Johnston Pond, the trees in the area of the Green on the west side of High Road and the trees along Warner's Path. The cricket ground and pavilion are the responsibility of Woodford Green Cricket Club. The site is covered by the Epping Forest Management Plan, which was revised 2004–5. LB of Redbridge is preparing an Enhancement Scheme for Woodford Green and it is anticipated that, following consultation, this will be adopted in 2006. In the LB of Redbridge, the Green Space Strategy dovetails with the Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) on Trees and Landscaping anticipated. Part of the area is a SSSI.

Special characteristics:

- Historic continuity: the Green retains much of its atmosphere as a vestige of green and woodland of Epping Forest and Waltham Forest, although High Road, once a north–south forest path, is now a physical barrier due to the busy road. Mature boundary trees and scrub growth screen traffic to some extent, however, a detached small area of green on the west side by High Elms has lost its connection with the main Green as a result. Horse-chestnut trees were planted around 1901 at the instigation of Woodford Green and Wanstead residents. Warner's Path remains a footpath marking an ancient path.

- The setting is enhanced by the many historic buildings that remain (both statutorily and locally listed) fringing the Green; in the north is All Saints Church.

- Grassland on the site is generally mown, with appearance of pasture, with well grown trees.

- Woodford Green Cricket Club was established here around 1735 and reputedly the second-oldest cricket ground in the country. In the summer, the cricket green was fenced against grazing cattle.

- Johnston Pond (or Potato Pond or Kendon's Pond, after a local butcher's shop that faced it) used to have a village pump – it is one of a number of old ponds marked on the first edition OS maps which remain. There is a detached area of Green to the west which also retains Firs Pond.

- An avenue of poplars was first planted around 1887 for Queen Victoria's Jubilee, originally on the eastern boundary of the Green. It was later realigned on Churchill statue in the late 1960s. Now, alternating poplars with planes are there. The EFC has replanted a number of poplars over the years and has a long-term restoration plan for the Avenue.

- Green Belt and Heritage Land status brings restrictions on high buildings.

Observable change from documentary sources:

- Loss of a notable landmark of Woodford Green.Congregational Church which was demolished in 1946 following WWII bomb damage.

- First cricket pavilion built 1959, permission having been granted to build on forest land by EFC; later extended several times.

- Erection of a statue of Winston Churchill in 1959 in a prominent position at the southern end. The focal point is to the realigned avenue of poplar trees, replanted in late 1960s.

- The roadway in front of The Terrace was made into a short dual carriageway in 1964 (Broadmead Road). A row of Horse-chestnuts were once on the northern boundary of the cricket pitch; the Green is now a central reservation.

- Erection of a public toilet near the north boundary of the cricket pitch.

Notable recent changes

- Designation of the Green as a Conservation Area in October 1970. This was extended in December 1981.

- An oak tree was planted in 1995 for VE Day in the south, near the Churchill statue.

- Grazing by cattle on the common land continued until the 1998 BSE crisis.

Issues:

- Uncoordinated street furniture, paving surfaces, safety barriers: The Conservation Area Enhancement Scheme report (1993) identified a need to replace existing street furniture, etc, with more sympathetic and appropriate treatment (for example, standardisation of bollards (wooden posts), softening of metal safety barriers by soft landscaping, and using traditional materials for pedestrian verges). Ideally a comprehensive treatment of the High Road but deemed expensive.

- Anti-social behaviour: Mainly litter – voluntary groups such as WGAG have been involved in regular litter collection. Little other signs although one of four concrete balls around a 19th-century obelisk is now missing.

- Car Parking: Some use of road verges of the Green (Johnston Road).

- Ecological enhancement: The pond adjacent to High Street and Johnston Road has been improved since 2000 (cleaned and desilted) with input from WGAG.

- Interpretative Material: A new village sign was erected at the suggestion of WGAG, 2003-4.

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Image 130 Woodford Green, Johnston's Pond today, the pump is no longer there and the trees much grown. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 131 The widening of Broadmead Road took part of the northern edge of Woodford Green, including a line of Horse-chestnuts, now stranded on the central reservation. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 132 Hurst House, at the south end of Woodford Green, with a listed obelisk on land maintained by LBR: one of the concrete balls at its foot is missing. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 133 Woodford Green, the historic cricket pitch with the pavilion in the distance. Horse-chestnut trees which border the busy High Road largely screen the traffic in view. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 134 Churchill Avenue along Woodford Green- note recent planting of plane trees to alternate with the older poplars. Epping Forest Conservators have long-term plans tomaintain the historic avenue. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

Image 135 Johnston Road towards Johnston's Pond. Note erosion of the verge of Woodford Green due to car-parking. Copyright: The Parks Agency.

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ISSUES AND PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE STUDY AND FUNDING

Most of these sites are owned and managed as part of the green space portfolio of the local authority. As such, many of the issues to be resolved by managers are identical to those confronting urban parks generally: pressure on budgets, a lack of revenue funding, vandalism, the pressure to accommodate widening demand for leisure facilities. These are all familiar problems.

So too is the extent to which an independent body might offer a way forward. The principle of an independent body administering a common was established in the 1866 Act. Some of these (such as Wimbledon) have worked well, but others (such as Wandsworth) failed and the site was handed over to the local authority. Some (such as Mitcham) struggle with chronic problems of uncertain funding. The issues relating to the setting up of new trusts are largely the same as those pertaining to more formal landscapes.

As a group, heaths, commons and village greens incorporate a very wide variety of different open spaces, with a huge variety of character, from Barnes Common to Brook Green. There are few similarities in terms of landscape character, ecology, or use, between a small village green and an extensive common or heath. Many of these sites have been municipally owned and managed for well over a century, with formal landscaping schemes, sports provision, public amenities, hard-surfaced paths and even railings, all long-established. They are to all intents and purposes urban parks.

A number also display distinctive characteristics deriving from their landscape history, with only a thin layer of formalised improvements overlying an older landscape. It is important, however, to recognise the amount of change that has generally occurred: the present appearance of these sites is rarely the same as that of a hundred or even fifty years ago. The withdrawal of agricultural practices such as grazing, the natural progression of scrub and secondary woodland on formerly open land and neglect as a result of reduced levels of management and maintenance, have often drastically changed their appearance and character. The new landscapes may have acquired ecological or landscape value or become cherished local places, and these factors need to be assessed against what has been lost and what it is desirable to restore or conserve.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing managers is to achieve a consensus on the vision for a site described as a heath, common or village green. Just as for Sexby in 1905, so today, they are different in people's minds from parks and gardens. They are strongly associated with a kind of informality absent from the traditional park, and increasingly cherished in modern London. The very words evoke a vanished heritage of wildness and of communality. Because of the emotive quality of these words and also the absence of an agreed vision of the places' character and roles, there are often strongly held and diverging views on their management. The idea of wild nature is growing stronger as London becomes ever more densely urban, and informal, nondescript green space becomes ever rarer. Places described as heaths and commons in particular become the focus for passionate arguments about nature.

This is not to say that they do not afford excellent opportunities for greater biodiversity and habitat-creation. It is important to recognise that this can in itself mean a drastic change from the present appearance, which has possibly been brought about by neglect and natural progression.

Perceptions of what a heath or common 'should' be like are often based on (a) the condition into which neglect or reduced management has brought them, and (b) a lack of knowledge of their historic character and appearance.

As with all green space, the greatest single factor affecting use is perception of public safety. Fear of crime is generally greater than the incidence of crime itself, but that does not obviate the need for managers to include understanding of this crucial issue in making decisions and formulating a decision-making framework.

Likewise, these sites are subject to continual pressure for leisure facilities: play areas, sports provision, cycle-routes, trim-trails, toilets, seating and litter bins, dog bins, dog zones, dog-free zones and pond-dipping boardwalks. Again as with all green space, there is a need to increase access under the Disability Discrimination Act, with accessible paths and surfaces, lighting and signage.

2005 RECOMMENDATIONS

There is unquestionably a need for further research to identify those sites which fall outside the typological grouping of urban parks, or which in part retain character areas outside that group. This report gives no more than a snapshot, which outlines the scope of a future research project. Current data on these sites are incomplete. The LPGT Inventory, the registers of commons, which will be augmented if the current Commons Bill becomes law, and further survey work planned by GiGL, are all potential sources of information. These will need to be reviewed to establish a more authoritative list of sites. More information on management by local authorities and others needs to be collected to complete the picture sketched here.

There is a need for management planning which assesses and prioritises different values and objectives, and establishes a common vision for these sites. The principle of preparing management schemes for these sites, established in the 1866 Act, is more important than ever. Sites described as heaths, commons and village greens offer a more complex management challenge than conventional public parks. English Heritage, in conjunction with the Heritage Lottery Fund, should consider sponsoring the preparation of a number of management plans
to test methodologies.

Both ecological and historic landscape conservation management are well served by promotion of a greater awareness of the evolution of these landscapes over the past hundred or even fifty years. Local authorities need to be more active in disseminating public information about the historic development of these sites. The archaeological significance of these sites needs to be further explored and identified. English Heritage's Urban Commons project[29] will complete the Greater London region shortly and should add significantly to our understanding of this issue.

The principle of an independent board of conservators responsible for the management of the larger sites should also be reconsidered. However, just as with public parks, the essential prerequisite is reliable funding. Whether this is more easily achievable by an independent body or trust or by a local authority may be a matter of the local context. The successes and shortcomings of boards of conservators or other independent or quasi-independent management groups needs to be assessed.

The history of these sites is frequently bound up with the efforts of local champions, first in saving them from development, then in acquiring them for the public, and finally in safeguarding them from further threats. This is a fine heritage, and the role of 'friends' groups and advisory committees should be strengthened. The modern approach to conservation management planning emphasises the importance of public participation, not just consultation, and of consensus-building. The role of the voluntary sector in the management of these sites needs to be identified and assessed.

A Greater London conference on these sites would be very welcome as a way to bring together managers and users, the professional and voluntary sectors, to explore issues, and to establish priorities for further research.

APPENDIX 1: SITES DESCRIBED AS HEATHS, COMMONS AND VILLAGE GREENS IN THE LONDON PARKS & GARDENS TRUST INVENTORY (2010)

BOROUGH	SITE NAME	PREVIOUS/ OTHER NAME	COMMON, REGISTERED HEATH, GREEN	COMMON OR TOWN VILLAGE GREEN AND REFERENCE
Barking & Dagenham	Becontree Heath		B: Heath	
Barking & Dagenham	St Chad's Park	Chadwell Heath	Former Common now part of Public Park	Yes: Green (TVG76 – part of park)
Barnet	Coppett's Wood and Scrublands Local Nature Reserve	Finchley Common	Former Common now Public Open Land	
Barnet	Golders Hill Park	Golders Hill House estate; Park is now part of Hampstead Heath	Former Heath now Public Park	
Barnet	Hadley Green		C: Green	
Barnet	Hampstead Heath Extension	The Wyldes	B: Heath	Yes: Common (CL18)
Barnet	Mill Hill Village Green		C: Green	
Barnet	Monken Hadley Common	Part of Enfield Chase	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL43)
Barnet	Ravenscroft Gardens	Barnet Common; Barnet Recreation Ground	Former Common now Public Park	
Barnet	Rowley Green Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL123)
Barnet	St Pancras andIslington Cemetery and Crematorium	Islington and St Pancras Cemetery	Former Common now Cemetery	
Barnet	Totteridge Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL60)
Barnet	Totteridge Green		C: Green	Yes: Common (CL60)
Bexley	Hurst Green Recreation Ground		Former Green?	

Bexley	The Green, Sidcup	Place Green; Sidcup Green	C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG75)
Brent	Butler's Green	Sudbury Common; Sudbury Recreation Ground	Former Common now Public Park	
Bromley	Broom Hill Common Local Open Space	Broomhill Common	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL87)
Bromley	Holy Trinity Churchyard, Bromley Common		Former Common now Churchyard	
Bromley	Keston Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL80)
Bromley	Sparrows Den		Former Common now Public Open Land	
Bromley	Spring Park including Cheyne Wood	Spring Park: Newe Park, West Park, Old Park; Cheyne Wood: Stramshall Lodge, Children's Heart Hospital, Cheyne Hospital	A: Common	Spring Park: Common exempted under 1965 Act
Bromley	Watermen's Square	Royal Free Watermen and Lightermen's Almshouses	Former Common now Private Garden	
Bromley	West Wickham Common		A: Common	Common exempted under 1965 Act
Camden	Branch Hill Woodland		B: Heath	
Camden	Gainsborough Gardens		Former Heath now Garden Square	
Camden	Hampstead Green	Pond Street Enclosure	C: Green	
Camden	Hampstead Heath, including West Heath		B: Heath	Yes: Common (CL18)
Camden	Highgate Enclosures	Kentish Town Green	Former Green now Public Gardens	

Camden	Highgate Reservoir	Highgate Service Reservoir; Highgate Green	Former Green now Private Open Land	
Camden	Holly Bush Hill, Green and Shrubbery		C: Green	
Camden	Keats House	Wentworth Place	Former Heath now Public Gardens	
Camden	Pond Square Gardens		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG72)
Camden	South End Green	Pond Street	C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG27)
Camden	South Grove Square and The Grove Enclosures	Highgate Green	Former Green now Public Open Land	
Camden	The Green, Flask Walk	Flask Walk	C: Green	
Camden	The Hill Garden and Pergola	The Hill House, The Hill, Inverforth House; Heath Lodge, Cedar Lawn	Former Heath now Public Gardens	
Camden	West End Green	Mill Lane Triangle	C: Green	
Croydon	Bradmore Green		C: Green	Yes: Common (CL9)
Croydon	Coombe Wood		Former Common now Public Park	
Croydon	Coulsdon Common		A: Common	Common exempted under 1965 Act
Croydon	Farthing Downs and New Hill	Farthing Down Common	A: Common	Farthing Down: Common exempted under 1965 Act
Croydon	Hall Grange and The Old Vicarage	Shirley Common	Former Common now Private Garden	
Croydon	Kenley Airfield	Kenley Commons; RAF Kenley	Former Common now Private Open Land	

Croydon	Kenley Common		A: Common	Common exempted under 1965 Act
Croydon	Littleheath Woods and Edgecoombe Playground	Littleheath Wood, Foxearth Woods, Queenhill Shaw, Gee Wood	Former Heath now Public Open Land	
Croydon	Norwood Grove	Great Streatham Common; Lime Common	Former Common now Public Park	
Croydon	Pinewood	Shirley Heath	B: Heath	
Croydon	Riddlesdown	Riddlesdoune; Riddlesdown Common	A: Common	Common exempted under 1965 Act
Croydon	Sanderstead Pond		C: Green	
Croydon	Woodside Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG58 & TVG68)
Ealing	Acton Green Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL118)
Ealing	Acton Park		Former Common now Public Park	
Ealing	Dean Gardens	Ealing Dene Common, Jackass Common	Former Common now Public Park	
Ealing	Drayton Green		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL116)
Ealing	Ealing Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL115)
Ealing	Ealing Green		C: Green	Yes: Common (CL114) / Green (TVG73 – small area)
Ealing	Haven Green		C: Green	Yes: Common (CL111)
Ealing	King George's Field (Hanwell)	Poor's Piece; Hanwell Heath	Former Common now Public Park	
Ealing	Northolt Village Green and Northolt Village Green Rest Garden		C: Green	Yes: Common (CL108)
Ealing	Norwood Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG11 – 2 parts)

Ealing	Warwick Dene		Former Common now Public Gardens	
Enfield	Chase Green, Chase Green Gardens & Cenotaph Gardens		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG15 – Chase Green)
Enfield	New River Gardens		Former Common now Public Gardens	
Enfield	Southgate Green	Southgate Village Green	C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG16)
Enfield	Whitewebbs Park and Golf Course	Whitewebbs	Former Common now Public Park	
Enfield	Winchmore Hill Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG14)
Greenwich	Blackheath		B: Heath	Yes: Common (CL11)
Greenwich	Bostall Heath and Bostall Woods	Bostall Woods: Old Park Wood	B: Heath	Yes: Common (Bostall Heath CL10)
Greenwich	Charlton House Grounds		Former Green now part of Public Gardens	
Greenwich	Eltham Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL40)
Greenwich	Eltham Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG10)
Greenwich	Kidbrooke Green	Rochester Way Playing Field	C: Green	Yes: Common (CL100)
Greenwich	King George's Field	Little Eltham Common	Former Common now Public Open Land	
Greenwich	Plumstead Common, including Winns Common	Plumstead Green	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL25)
Greenwich	Woolwich Common – Greenhill and the Rotunda Museum of Artillery		A: Common	
Hackney	Clapton Common	Broad Common	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL3)
Hackney	Hackney Downs Park		Former Common now Public Park	Yes: Common (CL16)

Hackney	Hackney Marshes	Hackney Marsh Recreation Ground (Daubeney Fields)	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL17)
Hackney	London Fields		Former Common now Public Park	Yes: Common (CL20)
Hackney	Millfields Park	North Millfields and South Millfields; North and South Millfields Recreation Grounds	Former Common now Public Park	Yes: Common (CL21 & CL22)
Hackney	Shacklewell Green & Shacklewell Lane Triangle		Former Green now Public Gardens	
Hackney	Stoke Newington Common	Newington Common, Cockhanger Green,Shackleton Common	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL27)
Hackney	Stonebridge Gardens	Stonebridge Common	Former Common now Public Park	
Hackney	Well Street Common	South Hackney Common	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL33)
Hammersmith & Fulham	Brook Green		C: Green	Yes: Common (CL4)
Hammersmith & Fulham	Eel Brook Common	Eelbrook Common	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL13)
Hammersmith & Fulham	Little Wormwood Scrubs		Former Common now Public Park	Yes: Common (CL19)
Hammersmith & Fulham	Parsons Green		Former Green now Public Park	Yes: Common (CL23)
Hammersmith & Fulham	Shepherd's Bush Green	Shepherd's Bush Common	Former Common now Public Park	Yes: Common (CL26)
Hammersmith & Fulham	St John's Churchyard, Walham Green		Former Green now Churchyard	
Hammersmith & Fulham	Wormwood Scrubs including Old Oak Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (Wormwood Scrubs CL34 & Old Oak CL35)
Haringey	Avenue Gardens		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG51)

Haringey	Chapman's Green		Former Green now Public Park	Yes: Green (TVG55)
Haringey	Crescent Gardens including King George VI Memorial Garden		Former Green now Public Gardens	Yes: Green (TVG47)
Haringey	Ducketts Common		A: Common	
Haringey	Page Green Common	Broad Lane Common; Seven Sisters; Page Greene	Former Common now Public Gardens	
Haringey	Tottenham Green & Tottenham Green East	High Cross Greene; High Cross Common; Trinity Church Common; Hospital Common	Former Common now Public Gardens	
Haringey	Trinity Gardens	Bounds Green Gardens	C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG46)
Haringey	West Green		Former Green now Public Gardens	
Haringey	Wood Green Common		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG52)
Harrow	Harrow Weald Common, Grim's Dyke Open Space, The City Open Space		A: Common	Yes: Common (Harrow Weald Common CL36)
Harrow	Little Common, Pinner		Former Common now Public Park	
Harrow	Little Common, Stanmore		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL51)
Harrow	Stanmore Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL50)
Harrow	Stanmore Marsh		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL52)
Harrow	Tookes Green	Nower Green; Nower Hill Green	C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG38)
Havering	Havering Village Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG29 – both sides of road)

Havering	Romford Garden Suburb – Reed Pond Walk Copse, Gidea Park Fishponds, Gidea Park Sports Ground	Part of Gidea Park Estate	C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG74 Reed Pond Walk OS & Copse)
Havering	Tylers Common	Upminster Common	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL1, CL72, CL97, 128, 129)
Hillingdon	Harefield Village Green	Harefield Common	C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG35)
Hillingdon Ruislip Woods	(including Park Wood, Copse Wood, Mad Bess Wood, Bayhurst Wood, Poor's Field)		A: Common	Yes: Common (Large Poor's Field CL94)
Hillingdon	St Mary's Churchyard, Harmondsworth Burial Ground and Harmondsworth Village Green	Harmondsworth Parish Church	C: Green	Yes: Green (Harmondsworth Green TVG34)
Hillingdon	West Drayton Green	West Drayton Village Green	C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG33)
Hounslow	Bedfont Green		C: Green	
Hounslow	Chiswick Back Common	Chiswick Common	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL47)
Hounslow	Feltham Green	The Green; Feltham Common	C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG18)
Hounslow	Hounslow Heath	Hounslow Heath Nature Reserve; Hounslow Heath Golf Course	B: Heath	
Hounslow	Stamford Brook Common		Former Common now Public Gardens	Yes: Common (CL48)
Hounslow	Turnham Green	Turnham Green Common	C: Green	Yes: Common (CL49)
Islington	Clerkenwell Green		Former Green now Public Open Land	
Islington	Islington Green		Former Green now Public Gardens	

Islington	Newington Green		Former Green now Public Gardens	
Kensington & Chelsea	Chelsea Green	Chelsea Common	Former Common now Public Gardens	
Kensington & Chelsea	Kensington Green	St Mary Abbots	Former Green now Private Gardens	
Kensington & Chelsea	Sloane Square		Former Green now Public Square	
Kingston	Back Green and Malden Green		Former Green now Public Open Land	Yes: Common (CL55 & CL56)
Kingston	Causeway Copse	Surbiton Common; Gosbury Hill Gardens	A: Common	
Kingston	Fishponds Park	Kingston Common	Former Common now Public Park	
Kingston	Leyfield Open Space	Old Malden Common	A: Common	
Kingston	Malden Golf Course	Norbiton Common; Jack Nicklaus Golf Centre	Former Common now Private Open Land	
Kingston	Plough Green and Plough Pond	Malden Pond; Old Malden Pond	C: Green	Yes: Common (CL54)
Lambeth	Becondale Road Open Space	Norwood Common	Former Common now Public Park	
Lambeth	Clapham Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL12 & CL73)
Lambeth	Kennington Park	Kennington Common	Former Common now Public Park	
Lambeth	Norwood Park	Norwood Common; New Park	Former Common now Public Park	
Lambeth	Rush Common including Raleigh Gardens	Rushey Common	A: Common	

Lambeth	St Mark's Churchyard	Kennington Little Common	Former Common now Churchyard	
Lambeth	Streatham Common	Lime Common, Lower Streatham Common, Stretham Common	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL28)
Lambeth	Streatham Green		C: Green	
Lambeth	Tate Library Garden	Tate Gardens	Former Common now Public Gardens	
Lambeth	The Rookery		Former Common now Public Gardens	Yes: Common (CL29)
Lewisham	Blackheath		B: Heath	Yes: Common (CL11)/Green (TVG77 – Tranquil Vale)
Lewisham	Hilly Fields		Former Common now Public Park	
Lewisham	Sydenham Wells Park		Former Common now Public Park	
Merton	Beverley Meads and Fishponds Wood		A: Common	
Merton	Cannizaro Park	Warren House	Former Common now Public Park	
Merton	Cannon Hill Common		Former Common now Public Park	
Merton	Figges Marsh		Former Common now Public Open Land	Yes: Green (TVG6)
Merton commons (Mitcham) Supplemental Act 1891	Mitcham Common		A: Common	Metropolitan Commons (Mitcham) Supplemental Act

Merton	Mitcham Greens (Fair Green, Three Kings Piece, Cranmer Green/ Piece, Cricket Green, Lower Green, Vestry Hall Green)		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG4,7,8 – Lower&Cricket/ Upper/3 Kings)
Merton	Mostyn Gardens		Former Common now Public Park	
Merton	Royal Wimbledon Golf Course		Former Common now Private Open Land	
Merton	St Helier Estate including Moreton Green		C: Green	
Merton	Wimbledon Common		A: Common	Wimbledon & Putney Commons Act 1871
Newham	St John the Evangelist Churchyard		Former Green now Churchyard	
Redbridge	Christchurch Green Recreation Ground	Spratthall Green	Former Green now Public Park	
Redbridge	George Green		C: Green	
Redbridge	Hainault Forest Country Park and Hainault Forest Golf Course		A: Common	Yes: Common (Lambourne Common CL41)
Redbridge	Knighton Wood	Buxton's Pond, Epping Forest	A: Common	
Redbridge	Little Heath Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG37)
Redbridge	Wanstead Flats and Bush Wood	Wanstead Heath; Bush Wood Flats, Manor Park Flats, Bush Wood North	A: Common	
Redbridge	Woodford Bridge Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG36)
Redbridge	Woodford Green		C: Green	
Richmond	Barnes Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL61 with Barnes Green)

Richmond	Barnes Green		C: Green	Yes: Common (CL61 with Barnes Common)
Richmond	East Sheen Common	Sheen Common	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL65)
Richmond	Ham Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL64)
Richmond	Hampton Court Green		C: Green	
Richmond	Kew Green and Kew Pond		C: Green	Yes: Common (Kew Pond CL105/Green (TVG28 -2 areas)
Richmond	Mortlake Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG2)
Richmond	Murray Park	Whitton Park Estate	Former Heath now Public Park	
Richmond	Old Barnes Cemetery	Barnes Common Cemetery	Former Common now Cemetery	
Richmond	Palewell Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL62)
Richmond	Pesthouse Common	Pest House Common	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL66)
Richmond	Petersham Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL63)
Richmond	Richmond Green and Little Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG25)
Richmond	Richmond Park		Former Common now Public Park	
Richmond	Richmond Terrace Walk and Terrace Field	Hill Common	Former Common now Public Open Land	
Richmond	Terrace and Buccleuch Gardens		Former Common now Public Gardens	
Richmond	Twickenham Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG23)
Richmond	Westerley Ware (Kew War Memorial Recreation Ground)		Former Common now Public Park Yes: Common (CL68)	

Southwark	Camberwell Green		C: Green	
Southwark	Dulwich College (and Alleyn's Almshouses)	Alleyn's College of God's Gift	Former Green now Institutional Grounds	Yes: Common (CL133 land in front of college)
Southwark	Dulwich Village Green		C: Green	Yes: Common (CL131 & 132)
Southwark	Goose Green		C: Green	Yes: Common (CL15)
Southwark	Nunhead Green		C: Green	Yes: Common (CL39)
Southwark	Peckham Rye Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (Peckham Rye Common CL24)
Southwark	Piermont Green		C: Green	
Sutton	Hackbridge Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG66)
Sutton	Mill Green		C: Green	
Sutton	Sutton Common Recreation Ground		Former Common now Public Park	
Sutton	Sutton Green	Sutton Common	C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG65)
Sutton	The Green, Cheam		C: Green	
Sutton	Wallington Green	Bowling Green	C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG67)
Sutton	Woodcote Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG57)
Sutton	Wrythe Green		C: Green	Yes: Green (TVG1 - in 3 parts)
Tower Hamlets	Bethnal Green	Library Gardens	Former Green now Public Gardens	
Tower Hamlets	Mile End Road Verges	Mile End Green; Mile End Gardens	Former Green now Public Gardens	
Tower Hamlets	Museum Gardens	Bethnal Green	Former Green now Public Gardens	
Tower Hamlets	Paradise Gardens	Bethnal Green	Former Common now Public Gardens	
Tower Hamlets	Stepney Green Gardens	Mile End Green; Stepney Green	Former Green now Public Gardens	

Tower Hamlets	Stepney Green Park	Mile End Green	Former Green now Public Park	
Tower Hamlets	Tower of London, including Tower Green		C: Green	
Tower Hamlets	V&A Museum of Childhood Garden	Bethnal Green Museum	Former Green now Public Gardens	
Waltham Forest	Chingford Green		C: Green	
Waltham Forest	Coronation Gardens Extension		Former Common now Public Gardens	
Waltham Forest	Epping Forest		A: Common	
Waltham Forest	Highams Park Epping Forest	Highams	A: Common	
Waltham Forest	Knotts Green		C: Green	
Waltham Forest	Leyton Green		C: Green	
Waltham Forest	Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and Fairmead Park, including Chingford Golf Course	Fairmead Bottom	A: Common	
Waltham Forest	Vestry House Museum & Walthamstow Village Green		C: Green	
Wandsworth	Clapham Common		A: Common	Yes: Common (CL12 & CL73)
Wandsworth	Garratt Green		Former Green now Public Park	Yes: Common (CL14)
Wandsworth	Latchmere Recreation Ground	Latchmere Common	Former Common now Public Gardens	
Wandsworth	Putney Lower Common		A: Common	Wimbledon & Putney Commons Act 1871
Wandsworth	Putney Lower Common Cemetery		Former Common now Cemetery	
Wandsworth	Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields		Former Common now Public Open Land	

Wandsworth	Royal Victoria Patriotic Building Grounds	Wandsworth Common; Spencer Park School	Former Common now Public and Private Open Land	
Wandsworth	Spencer Park		Former Common now Private Garden	
Wandsworth	St Mary's Cemetery	Battersea St Mary's Cemetery; Battersea Rise Cemetery	Former Common now Cemetery	
Wandsworth	Tooting Common	Tooting Bec Common and Tooting Graveney Common	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL30 & CL31)
Wandsworth	Wandsworth Common	Battersea West Heath; Wandsworth East Heath	A: Common	Yes: Common (CL32)
Westminster	Paddington Green		Former Green now Public Gardens	
Westminster	St Mary's Church, Paddington Green		Former Green now Churchyard	

APPENDIX 2: GAZETTEER FROM AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF TOWN COMMONS IN ENGLAND 'A VERY FAIR FIELD INDEED' BY MARK BOWDEN, GRAHAM BROWN AND NICKY SMITH. SWINDON: ENGLISH HERITAGE, 2009

The gazetteer has been compiled from the 1870 Parliamentary Return of all towns which had at that time, or were known to have had in the past, common lands, and from numerous other sources. The omission of a town or city from this gazetteer does not imply that it has not, or never had, common lands – only that no evidence has been noted in the course of the English Heritage project.

The National Grid References are intended to give the general location of the town or city only, not the location of any particular common land. The present, not historical, county or local authority is listed.

Places marked with asterisks are those where some degree of physical survival of the common lands has been noted in the course of the English Heritage project. Where there is only one asterisk survival is slight, in the form of the current street pattern for instance. Four asterisks represent considerable extant commons with good survival of features of archaeological and historical interest. However, it should be noted that this ranking is based upon subjective judgement and sometimes limited evidence.

TOWN NAME	COMMONS MENTIONED BY NAME IN THE TEXT	COUNTY/LOCAL AUTHORITY	SURVIVAL?
Abingdon	Abingdon Common	Oxon	*
Accrington		Lancs	*
Aldeburgh		Suff	
Aldershot		Hants	
Alnmouth	Alnmouth Common	Northum	
Alnwick		Northum	
Alston		Cumb	**
Altrincham		Trafford	
Amersham		Bucks	
Amesbury		Wilts	
Andover		Hants	
Appleby		Cumb	*
Arundel		W Suss	
Ashby-de-la-Zouche		Leics	
Atherstone		Warks	
Axbridge		Som	
Axminster		Devon	
Aylesbury		Bucks	
Bakewell		Derbys	
Bampton		Oxon	**
Banbury		Oxon	*

Barnard Castle		Co Durham	
Basingstoke		Hants	
Bath		BaNES	
Batley		Yorks	
Beaminster	Beaminster Down	Dorset	
Beccles		Suff	
Bedford		Beds	
Berkhamsted	Berkhamsted Common	Herts	
Berwick		Northum	
Beverley	Figham Common; Hurn Common; Swine Moor; Westwood Common	E Yorks	****
Biggleswade	Biggleswade Common	Beds	****
Birmingham		Birmingham	
Bishop's Castle		Salop	
Bishop's Stortford		Herts	
Bodmin		Cornw	*
Bolton		Lancs	
Boroughbridge		N Yorks	
Boscastle		Cornw	*
Bossiney		Cornw	
Bournemouth		Dorset	
Bradford	Baildon Bank and Moor	Bradford Dist	
Brading (IoW)		Hants	
Bradninch		Devon	
Brampton		Cumb	
Brandon		Suff	***
Bridlington		E Yorks	
Brighton		Brighton & Hove	
Bristol	Brandon Hill; Clifton Down; Durdham Down	Bristol	**
Brixham		Devon	*
Bromley		Greater London	
Bromsgrove		Worcs	
Brough		Cumb	
Burford	High Mead	Oxon	**
Burton-upon-Trent		Staffs	
Bury St Edmund		Suff	
Calne		Wilts	
Cambridge	Donkey's Common; Laundress Green; Midsummer Common; Port Field (later Carme Field); Scholars' Piece	Cambs	**
Carlisle		Cumb	

Chatteris		Cambs	
Chelmsford	Galleywood Common	Essex	
Cheltenham		Glos	
Chesham		Bucks	
Chester	the Roodee	Ches	*
Chester-le-Street		Co Durham	
Chichester	Portfield	W Suss	
Chippenham	West Mead	Wilts	
Chipping Norton		Oxon	***
Chorley		Lancs	*
Christchurch		Dorset	*
Cirencester		Glos	
Clitheroe	Clitheroe Town Moors	Lancs	*
Coalville		Leics	
Cobham		Surrey	
Cockermouth		Cumb	
Colchester		Essex	*
Congleton		Ches	
Corfe	Corfe Common	Dorset	****
Coventry		Warks	
Cricklade	Cricklade Common	Wilts	***
Croston		Lancs	
Croydon		Greater London	
Dalton		Cumb	
Darlington		Co Durham	
Dartford		Kent	*
Daventry		Northants	
Deddington		Oxon	
Derby		Derbys	
Dewsbury		Kirklees Dist	
Diss		Norf	*
Doncaster	Doncaster Town Moor	Doncaster Dist	***
Dorking	Cotmandene Chart	Surrey	
Dudley		Dudley	
Dunwich		Suff	
Durham		Co Durham	
East Dereham		Norf	
East Retford		Notts	
Egremont		Cumb	
Ely		Cambs	**
Epsom & Walton	Epsom Downs	Surrey	*
Erith		Greater London	
Esher	Ditton Common	Surrey	
Evesham		Worcs	

Exeter		Devon	*
Eye		Suff	
Fakenham		Norf	
Fareham		Hants	
Farnborough		Hants	
Farnham		Surrey	
Flookburgh		Cumb	
Folkestone		Kent	
Fordwich		Kent	
Gainsborough		Lincs	
Gateshead		Gateshead	
Glastonbury	Common Moor	Som	
Glossop		Derbys	
Gloucester		Glos	
Godalming		Surrey	**
Godmanchester		Cambs	
Grantham		Lincs	
Great Grimsby	East Marsh; West Marsh	Lincs	
Great Malvern		Worcs	
Great Torrington	Great Torrington Common	Devon	**
Greystoke		Cumb	*
Guildford		Surrey	
Hadleigh		Suff	
Halesowen		Dudley	
Halifax		Calderdale Dist	
Harpenden	Harpenden Common	Herts	
Harrogate	Harrogate Stray	N Yorks	**
Hartlepool		Cleve	
Haverhill		Sffk	
Hedon		E Yorks	*
Hemel Hempstead		Herts	
Hereford		Heref	*
Hertford	Hartham Common; King's Meads	Herts	**
High Wycombe		Bucks	
Higham Ferrers		Northants	
Hinckley		Leics	*
Hitchin		Herts	
Hornby		Lancs	
Hornsea		E Yorks	
Huddersfield		Kirklees Dist	
Hungerford	Freeman's Marsh; Hungerford Common (originally Port Down Common);	Berks	****

Huntingdon	Portholme Meadow; Walnut Tree Common	Cambs	**
Ipswich		Suff	
Kendal	Kendal Fell	Cumb	**
Keswick		Cumb	
Kettering		Northants	
Kidderminster		Worcs	
King's Lynn		Norf	
Kirkby Lonsdale		Cumb	
Kirkby Stephen		Cumb	
Kirkham		Lancs	
Knaresborough		N Yorks	
Lancaster		Lancs	
Launceston		Cornw	
Ledbury		Herefs	
Leeds		Leeds Dist	
Leek		Staffs	
Leicester		Leics	*
Leighton Buzzard		Beds	
Leominster		Herefs	
Lewes		E Sx	
Lichfield		Staffs	
Lincoln	Cow Paddle; Monk's Leys Common; South Common; West Common	Linc	****
Liskeard		Cornw	
Liverpool		Liverpool	
London	Blackheath Common; Chelsea Common; Clapham Common; Eltham Common; Hammersmith Common; Hampstead Heath; Kennington Common; Moorfields; Streatham Common; Wandsworth Common	Greater London	
Looe		Cornw	*
Loughborough	Big Meadow	Leics	**
Lowestoft		Suff	
Ludlow		Salop	*
Luton		Beds	*
Lutterworth		Leics	
Lydd	East Ripe; West Ripe	Kent	**
Macclesfield		Ches	
Maidenhead		Berks	*
Maidstone		Kent	

Malmesbury	Portmannesheath	Wilts	
Maltby		Rotherham	
Malton		N Yorks	
Manchester	Heaton Park; Kersal Moor; Wardle Common	Manchester	
March		Cambs	
Market Rasen		Lincs	
Marlborough	Marlborough Common; Marlborough Downs; Portfield	Wilts	**
Masham		N Yorks	
Matlock		Derbys	
Melton Mowbray		Leics	
Minchinhampton	Minchinhampton Common	Glos	****
Morpeth		Northum	*
Nantwich		Ches	*
Newark		Notts	
Newbury	Crookham Common; Greenham Common	Berks	
Newcastle under Lyme		Staffs	
Newcastle upon Tyne	Castle Leazes; Duke's Moor; Hunter's Moor; Little Moor; Newcastle Town Moor; Nuns Moor	Newcastle	****
Newmarket		Suff	
Newport (IoW)		Hants	
Newport Pagnell		Bucks	
Newquay		Cornw	
Northallerton		N Yorks	
Northampton	Cow Meadow	Northants	*
Norwich	Chapel Fields; Mousehold Heath	Norf	*
Nottingham		Notts	*
Nuneaton		Warks	
Okehampton	Okehampton Common	Devon	*
Oldham		Oldham	
Ormskirk	Ormskirk Moss	Lancs	
Oswestry		Salop	
Oundle		Northants	
Oxford	Port Meadow; Wolvercote Common	Oxon	***
Padstow		Cornw	
Paignton		Devon	
Penrith		Cumb	
Penwortham		Lancs	

Pershore		Worcs	
Peterborough	Borough Fen	Cambs	
Petersfield	Petersfield Heath Common	Hants	***
Pevensey		E Sx	
Pickering		N Yorks	
Plumstead		Greater London	
Plympton		Devon	
Pontefract		Wakefield Dist	
Poole	Canford Heath	Dorset	**
Portsea		Hants	
Prescot		Knowsley	
Preston	Moor Park	Lancs	*
Queenborough		Kent	
Reading		Berks	
Reigate	Banstead Heath; Earlswood Common	Surrey	
Richmond		N Yorks	**
Ripon		N Yorks	
Rochdale		Rochdale Dist	
Rotherham		Rotherham Dist	
Rugby		Warks	
Rugeley		Staffs	
Ruyton		Salop	
Rye		E Sx	
Saffron Walden		Suff	***
Sandbach		Ches	
Scarborough		N Yorks	
Sedbergh		Cumb	
Settle		Yorks	
Shaftesbury		Dorset	
Sheffield	Crooks Moor	Sheffield Dist	
Shrewsbury	'The Quarry'	Salop	**
Sleaford		Lincs	
Skipton		N Yorks	
Southampton	Southampton Common	Hants	**
Southsea	Southsea Common	Hants	
Southwold		Suff	
Sowerby		Calderdale Dist	
St Ives		Cambs	
St Ives		Cornw	
St Neots		Cambs	
Stafford	Stafford Common	Staffs	***

Staines	Staines Moor	Surrey	**
Stamford		Lincs	**
Stockbridge		Hants	
Stockport		Stockport	
Stone		Staffs	
Stratford-upon-Avon		Warks	
Sudbury	King's Marsh; North Meadow Common	Suff	***
Sunderland		Sunderland	
Sutton Coldfield	Sutton Park	Birmingham	***
Swaffham		Norf	
Tadcaster		N Yorks	
Tamworth		Warks	
Tavistock		Devon	
Tetbury		Glos	
Tewkesbury	Severn Ham	Glos	**
Thame		Oxon	
Thaxted		Essex	
Thetford		Norf	
Thirsk		N Yorks	
Towcester		Northants	
Tregony		Cornw	
Tring		Herts	
Tunbridge Wells	Rusthall Common; Tunbridge Wells Common	Kent	**
Ulverston		Cumb	**
Uppingham		Leics	
Upton-on-Severn		Worcs	
Wakefield	Holme Moor (or Common Heath)	Wakefield Dist	
Wallingford		Oxon	**
Walsall		Walsall	
Wantage		Oxon	
Ware		Herts	
Wareham		Dorset	**
Warminster		Wilts	**
Warwick		Warks	
Watford		Herts	
Wells		Som	
Wendover		Bucks	
West Bromwich		Sandwell	
Weybridge	Weybridge Heath	Surrey	
Weymouth		Dorset	

Whitby		N Yorks	
Whitehaven		Cumb	
Whitstable		Kent	
Wigan		Lancs	*
Wigton		Cumb	
Wilmslow		Ches	
Wilton		Wilts	
Wimbledon	Wimbledon Common	Greater London	**
Wimborne		Dorset	
Wisbech		Cambs	
Woking	Horsell Common; St John's Lye	Surrey	
Wolverhampton		Wolverhampton	
Woodstock		Oxon	
Woolwich	Woolwich Common	Greater London	
Worcester	Moorsfields; Pitchcroft	Worcs	**
Workington		Cumb	
Worksop		Notts	
Wymondham		Norf	
York	Bootham Stray; Hob Moor; Knavesmire; Micklegate Stray; Walmgate Stray	N Yorks	****

APPENDIX 3: GREEN FLAG AWARD WINNERS 2014-15

The national Green Flag Award scheme recognises well-managed and high quality green spaces. To be eligible sites must be freely accessible to the public and perform well against eight criteria including the health, safety and security of the site, its cleanliness, management and sustainability. Many commons, heaths and greens are now participating in Green Flag to raise management standards.

The Green Flag scheme includes two special categories. The Green Pennant Award recognises green spaces managed by voluntary and community groups that are, amongst other things, welcoming, well-maintained, feature biodiversity, environmental sustainability and community involvement. Green Heritage Accreditation focuses on the heritage value of sites and conservation management.

The list below illustrates the range of commons, heaths and greens achieving the Green Flag Award across England. Sites marked with an asterisk were also awarded Green Heritage Site accreditation. The list could be expanded to include moors, downs, meadows, woodlands and new community green spaces such as Millennium and Doorstep Greens.

East of England

Harpenden Town Council
Harpenden Common

North Hertfordshire District Council
Norton Common
Oughtonhead Common

St Albans District Council
Bricket Wood Common

London

City of London
Ashtead Common
Burnham Beeches
Coulsdon Common
Epping Forest
Farthing Downs & New Hill
Hampstead Heath
Kenley Common
West Wickham Common

LB Hackney
Well Street Common
Ducketts Common

LB Haringey
Chapmans Green

LB Hillingdon
Harefield Village Green
Uxbridge Common

LB Hounslow
Turnham Green

LB Lewisham
Blackheath

LB Redbridge
Hainault Forest Country Park

LB Richmond upon Thames
Ham Village Green
Hampton Common
Kew Green
Palewell Common & Fields
Richmond Green
Twickenham Green

North West

Sillouth Town Council
Sillouth Green

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Haughton Green Playing Fields

Wirral Council
Thornton Hough Village Green

South East

East Sussex County Council
Ditchling Common Country Park

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
Epsom Common Local Nature Reserve

Hart District Council
Elvetham Heath Open Spaces and Local Nature Reserve

South West

Bournemouth Borough Council
Redhill Park and Common

West Midlands

Birmingham City Council
Victoria Common

Bourneville Village Trust
Bourneville Village Green

Yorkshire and the Humber

Sheffield City Council
Devonshire Green
Tinsley Green

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www.defra.gov.uk/rural/protected/commonland

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www.defra.gov.uk/rural/protected/commonland

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www.defra.gov.uk/rural/protected/commonland

Defra 20 February 2014 *Common land: management, protection and registering to use.*
www.gov.uk/common-land-management-protection-and-registering-to-use

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ABBREVIATIONS

CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
CABE Space	The green space programme of Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
Defra	Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EFC	Epping Forest Conservators
EH	English Heritage
GiGL	Greenspace Information for Greater London
GLA	Greater London Authority
GSS	Green Space Strategy
HA1	Woodland Habitat Audit
HA3	Acid Grassland Habitat Audit
HA6	Heathland Habitat Audit
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
IASC	International Association for the Study of the Commons
LB	London Borough
LCC	London County Council
LPGT	London Parks & Gardens Trust
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
MBW	Metropolitan Board of Works
MMP	Management and Maintenance Plans
MPGA	Metropolitan Public Gardens Association
MOL	Metropolitan Open Land
NMR	National Monuments Record

OS	Ordnance Survey
PCEG	Plumstead Common Environment Group
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
RDS	Rural Development Service (formerly part of Defra, now Natural England)
SSSI(s)	Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest
SPD	Supplementary Planning Documents
UDC	Urban District Council
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
WGAG	Woodford Green Amenity Group

USEFUL CONTACTS

All London Green Grid
www.london.gov.uk

Association of Commons Registration Authorities (ACRA)
www.acraew.org.uk
email: admin@acraew.org.uk

Countryside and Community Research Institute
www.ccri.ac.uk

Defra's Commons Team
Defra
3/C Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
www.gov.uk/common-land-management-protection-and-registering-to-use
email: commonsandgreens@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Foundation for Common Land
http://common-threads.org.uk
email: info@foundationforcommonland.org.uk

Grazing Animals Project
Rare Breeds Survival Trust
Stoneleigh Park
Nr Kenilworth
Warcs CV8 2LG
www.grazinganimalsproject.org.uk
tel: 02476 698761

Green Flag Award
www.greenflagaward.org.uk

Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL)
see also London Wildlife Trust
www.gigl.org.uk

Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA
www.london.gov.uk
tel: 020 7983 4000

Heritage Gateway
www.heritagegate.org.uk

The International Association for the Study of the Commons
IASC Secretariat
Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales
Circuito Mario de la Cueva
Ciudad Universitaria
Mexico City D.F
C.P. 04510
MEXICO
tel. 0052-55-56227423
email: iasc@iasc-commons.org

London Metropolitan Archives
40 Northampton Road
London EC1R 0HB
www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma
tel: 020 7332 3820
email: ask.lma@cityoflondon.gov.uk

London Parks & Gardens Trust
Duck Island Cottage
St James's Park
London SW1A 2BJ
www.londongardenstrust.org
tel: 020 7839 3969

London Parks & Gardens Trust Inventory and London Gardens Online
www.londongardensonline.org.uk

London Parks and Green Spaces Forum
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA
email: tony.leach@lpgsf.org.uk
tel: 0207 983 4495

London Wildlife Trust
Dean Bradley House
52 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 2AF
www.wildlondon.org.uk
tel: 020 7261 0447
email: enquiries@wildlondon.org.uk

Metropolitan Public Gardens Association
www.mpga.org.uk

Natural England
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/commonland
tel: 0300 060 3900
email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

Nigel Temple postcard collection
viewfinder.english-heritage.org.uk

Open Spaces Society
25A Bell Street
Henley-on-Thames
Oxon RG9 2BA
www.oss.org.uk
tel: 01491 573535,
email: hq@oss.org.uk

Our Green Space
www.ourgreenspace.org.uk/

Royal Parks Agency
The Old Police House
Hyde Park
London W2 2UH
www.royalparks.org.uk
tel:020 7298 2000
email: hq@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk

The National Heritage List for England
The database of all nationally designated heritage assets.
list.english-heritage.org.uk

Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/thhprogramme.aspx

Viewfinder
English Heritage's historic photographs collections – including the many Nigel Temple postcards of commons, heaths and greens
viewfinder.english-heritage.org.uk

FRIENDS GROUPS IN LONDON

Friends of Acton Park
actonpark.co.uk/

Friends of Bostall Heath and Bostall Woods
www.fbhw.moonfruit.com

Friends of Brook Green
www.friendsofbrookgreen.org.uk

Friends of Clapham Common
claphamcommon.org

Friends of Ducketts Common
www.duckettscommon.org.uk

Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers
www.efcv.co.uk

Friends of Farthing Downs
www.theocra.org.uk

Friends of Hampstead Heath
see www.camden.org.uk

Friends of Hounslow Heath
www.friendsofhounslowheath.org.uk

Friends of Keston Common
www.friendsofkestoncommon.btck.co.uk

Friends of Kidbrooke Green
friendsofkidbrookegreenpark@yahoo.co.uk

Friends of Littleheath Woods
www.folw.co.uk

Friends of Monken Hadley Common
www.monkenhadleycommon.org.uk

Plumstead Common Environment Group
www.pceg.org.uk

Pond Square Residents Association
see www.camden.gov.uk

Friends of Ruislip Woods and Ruislip Woods Trust
www.ruislipwoodstrust.org.uk

Friends of Spring Park Wood
www.friendsofspringparkwood.co.uk/

Friends of Stanmore Common
www.harrowncf.org/SC_friends

Friends of Stoke Common
www.friendsofstokecommon.org.uk

Friends of Turnham Green
www.hounslow.info/parks/friendsgroups

Friends of Wormwood Scrubs
www.friendsofwormwoodscrubs.org.uk

LONDON BOROUGHS

Barking & Dagenham
Local Land Charges Section
Town Hall
Barking IG11 7LU
www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk
tel: 020 8227 3426
email: llcservice@lbbd.gov.uk

Barnet
Planning, Conservation and Regeneration
North London Business Park (NLBP)
Oakleigh Road South
London N11 1NP
www.barnet.gov.uk
tel: 020 8359 3000
email: first.contact@barnet.gov.uk

Bexley
Parks and Open Spaces
Civic Offices
2 Watling Street
Bexleyheath DA6 7AT
www.bexley.gov.uk
tel:020 8303 7777
email: parksandopenspaces@bexley.gov.uk

Brent
Parks and Open Spaces
Brent Civic Centre
Engineers Way
Wembley HA9 0FJ
www.brent.gov.uk
tel: 020 8937 5619
email: parks.service@brent.gov.uk

Bromley
Parks and Open Spaces
Bromley Civic Centre
Stockwell Close
Bromley BR1 3UH
www.bromley.gov.uk
tel: 020 8464 3333

Camden
Local Land Charges Office
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www.camden.gov.uk/planning
tel: 020 7974 5660

City of London
Open Spaces Department
PO Box 270
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London EC2P 2EJ
www.cityoflondon.gov.uk
tel: 020 7332 3505

Croydon
Parks and Open Spaces
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk
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www.croydon.gov.uk
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email: parks@croydon.gov.uk

Ealing
Parks and Open Spaces
Leisure and Parks Service
Perceval House
14-16 Uxbridge Road
Ealing W5 2HL
www.ealing.gov.uk
tel: 020 8825 6999
email: parks@ealing.gov.uk

Enfield
Planning, Property and Lane
Civic Centre
Silver Street
Enfield EN1 3BR
www.enfield.gov.uk
tel: 020 8379 3870
email: planningpolicy@enfield.gov.uk

Greenwich
Parks and Open Spaces
Oxleas Woods Centre
Crown Woods Lane
London SE18 3JA
www.greenwich.gov.uk
tel: 020 8921 6885
email: parks@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Hackney
Parks and Green Spaces
Community Services Directorate
Hackney Service Centre
1 Hillman Street
London E8 1DY
www.hackney.gov.uk
tel: 020 8356 8428
email: parks@hackney.gov.uk

Hammersmith & Fulham
Parks and Open Spaces
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King Street
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London W6 9JU
www.lbhf.gov.uk
tel: 020 8748 3020
email: information@lbhf.gov.uk

Haringey
Parks and Open Spaces
Civic Centre
High Road
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London N22 8LE
www.haringey.gov.uk
tel: 020 8489 0000
email: parks@haringey.gov.uk

Harrow
Parks and Open Spaces
Harrow Civic Centre
Station Road
Harrow HA1 2XF
www.harrow.gov.uk
tel: 020 8901 2600

Havering
Leisure, Parks and Libraries
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Main Road
Romford RM1 3BB
www.havering.gov.uk
tel: 01708 434343
email: parks@havering.gov.uk

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Uxbridge UB8 1UW
www.hillingdon.gov.uk
tel: 01895 556000

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www.hounslow.gov.uk
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email: customerservices@hounslow.gov.uk

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Parks and Environment
222 Upper Street
London N1 1XR
www.islington.gov.uk
tel: 020 7527 2000

Kensington & Chelsea
Parks and Open Spaces
Council Offices
37 Pembroke Road
London W8 6PW
www.rbkc.gov.uk
tel: 020 7361 3003
email: leisure.services@rbkc.gov.uk

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www.kingston.gov.uk
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Parks and Green Spaces
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Wearside Road
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www.lewisham.gov.uk
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Merton
Parks and Open Spaces
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
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www.merton.gov.uk
tel: 020 8545 3889

Newham
Parks and Open Spaces
Newham Dockside
1000 Dockside Road
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www.newham.gov.uk
tel: 020 8430 2000
email: customer.services@newham.gov.uk

Redbridge
Parks Development Team
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210 Wash Lodge
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Ilford IG1 4TG
www.redbridge.gov.uk
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www.richmond.gov.uk
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email: parks@richmond.gov.uk

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Waltham Forest
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Westminster
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END NOTES

1 Sexby, 1905, xvii

2 University of Aberystwyth for Defra 2002 The Common Lands of Greater London: a biological survey pp 7-8

3 National Statistics 2003 Focus on London p 20

4 See for example Nicholson Lord 2004

5 Clapham Society 1995 p 4

6 Sexby 1905 xvii

7 Sexby 1905 xviii-xix

8 Denman et al 1967 p 161

9 London Biodiversity Partnership and English Nature Heathland Habitat Action Plan, see also LBP Habitat Audit HA6: Heathland

10 Clayden 1985 p 63

11 Sexby 1905 p245-6

12 Sexby 1905 p246

13 See Bowden, Mark et al 2009

14 National Archives MAF 4

15 Crowe 1987 p 284

16 Denman at al 1967 p 161

17 Denman et al 1967 p 162

18 Denman at el 1967 p 162

19 Denman et al 1967 p 162

20 Nicholson Lord 2004

21 Kim Wilkie Associates 2001 The Green, Little Green and Old Palace Yard, Richmond upon Thames: Landscape Assessment

22 Numbers correct as of 2005

23 The exaplanatory notes the Bill 2005, the report of the Working Group 2003, and the Policy Statement 2002

24 The Commons Act 2006 received Royal assent on 19 July 2006. It repeals the Commons and Registration Act 1995. See www.gov.uk/common-land-management-protection-and-registering-to-use for more information

25 Weinreb and Hibbert 1993 p 42

26 Archer and Curson 1993 pp 57-60

27 Meller 1994 p 72

28 Pevsner London 2: South p 501

29 The urban commons project has been published - see Bowden, M et al 2009

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